

Homage  
to  
**Robert Browning**

BY ALFRED TANNER

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*Homage to  
Robert Browning*

*By ALEPH TANNER*

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## INTRODUCTION

This book has resulted from a course in the study of the poetry of Robert Browning which I took while attending Baylor University. My knowledge of the poet and his work was extremely limited—and I fear prejudiced—but the more I studied, the greater was my enthusiasm and admiration. This led me to undertake for my senior thesis (A. B.) the gathering of tributes to Robert Browning, and the task has afforded me much pleasure—despite the immense amount of work necessary to collect these poems and secure the privilege to print them.

Some poems contained in the volume have never before been published: they were written and read at special Browning functions, and it has been due to the generous co-operation of Browning lovers everywhere that I have been able to locate these lines. Even now I have secured information concerning other poems which I fear will not reach me in time to include in this book. I feel certain that there will be another volume issued as a supplement to this one, so that I now appeal to all readers to send to me or to Dr. A. J. Armstrong, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, any other poems or information concerning other poems which I have not included. At first it was purposed to include parodies, but the collection grew to such proportions—and the parodies have a unity in themselves—that it was decided to use only the serious poems and to issue later a collection known as *Parodies of Robert Browning's Poems*. Any one knowing of parodies will confer a great favor by reporting such poems.

Since the admirers of Browning live in every clime and follow every walk in life, one will not be surprised to find here a variety of verses, and as a natural result the contrast in poems is at times marked, yet all have sought to render "Homage to Robert Browning"—so that in our arrangement "there is no first or last."

Browning! That name has served as a password which has opened to me many a treasured friendship, for all

Browning lovers seem to have caught the Poet's optimistic message and, like Pippa, can always sing,

*"God's in His heaven,  
All's right with the world!"*

That you, dear reader, may derive pleasure from these pages is my earnest hope, for it has been a work of love.

My indebtednesses have been so numerous that I have hardly known where to begin to acknowledge them. Miss Marie Ada Molineux, of the Boston Browning Society; Miss Florence Weir Gibson, of the New York Browning Society; Mr. Frank H. Chase, of the Boston Public Library; Dr. S. G. Ayer, of Garret Biblical Institute, Evanston; the librarians of Baylor University, of New York City, of Congress and of the British Museum, have generously co-operated. The authors and publishers of the poems collected have without exception given me permission to reprint their works. But most of all, I would thank my teacher and friend, Dr. A. J. Armstrong, whose devotion to Browning has through a long period of years induced many students to sit at the feet of this master poet and has sent them on their way with an abiding love for poetry and with higher ideals of life.

ALEPH TANNER.

Gonzales, Texas, May 7, 1920.

*Homage to Robert Browning*

## DEDICATION

THIS HOMAGE TO ROBERT BROWNING IS DEDICATED TO  
DR. A. J. ARMSTRONG,  
BROWNING-LOVER, WHOSE UNTIRING EFFORTS HAVE  
MADE THIS VOLUME POSSIBLE.

SONNETS  
FROM THE PORTUGUESE  
BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

I

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:  
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,  
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,  
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung  
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,  
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,  
And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . . .  
'Guess now who holds thee?'—'Death,' I said.

But, there,  
The silver answer rang . . . 'Not Death, but Love.'

II.

BUT only three in all God's universe  
Have heard this word thou hast said,—Himself, beside  
Thee speaking, and me listening! and replied  
One of us . . *that* was God,. . and laid the curse  
So darkly on my eyelids, as to amerce  
My sight from seeing thee,—that if I had died,  
The deathweights, placed there, would have signified  
Less absolute exclusion. 'Nay' is worse  
From God than from all others, O my friend!  
Men could not part us with their worldly jars,  
Nor the seas change us, nor the tempest bend;  
Our hands would touch for all the mountain-bars,—  
And, heaven being rolled between us at the end,  
We should but vow the faster for the stars.

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## HOMAGE TO

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### III.

UNLIKE are we, unlike, O princely Heart!  
Unlike our uses and our destinies.  
Our ministering two angels look surprise  
On one another as they strike athwart  
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art  
A guest for queens to social pageantries,  
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes  
Than tears even can make mine, to play thy part  
Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do  
With looking from the lattice-lights at me,  
A poor, tired, wandering singer, . . . singing through  
The dark, and leaning up a cypress-tree?  
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—  
And Death must dig the level where these agree.

### IV

THOU hast thy calling to some palace-floor,  
Most gracious singer of high poems! where  
The dancers will break footing, from the care  
Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.  
And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor  
For hand of thine? and canst thou think and bear  
To let thy music drop here unaware  
In folds of golden fulness at my door?  
Look up and see the casement broken in,  
The bats and owlets builders in the roof!  
My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.  
Hush, call no echo up in further proof  
Of desolation! there's a voice within  
That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

### V.

I LIFT my heavy heart up solemnly,  
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,  
And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn  
The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see  
What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,  
And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn  
Through the ashen greyness. If thy foot in scorn  
Could tread them out to darkness utterly,  
It might be well perhaps. But if instead  
Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow  
The grey dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,  
O my Belovèd, will not shield thee so,  
That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred  
The hair beneath. Stand further off then! go.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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VI.

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand  
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore  
Alone upon the threshold of my door  
Of individual life, I shall command  
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand  
Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
Without the sense of that which I forbore, . . .  
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land  
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine  
With pulses that beat double. What I do  
And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue  
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,  
And sees within my eyes, the tears of two.

VII.

THE face of all the world is changed, I think,  
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul  
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole  
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink  
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,  
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole  
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole  
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,  
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.  
The names of country, heaven, are changed away  
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;  
And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday,  
(The singing angels know) are only dear,  
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

VIII.

WHAT can I give thee back, O liberal  
And princely giver, who hast brought the gold  
And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,  
And laid them on the outside of the wall  
For such as I to take or leave withal,  
In unexpected largesse? am I cold,  
Ungrateful, that for these most manifold  
High gifts, I render nothing back at all?  
Not so; not cold,—but very poor instead.  
Ask God who knows. For frequent tears have run  
The colours from my life, and left so dead  
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done  
To give the same as pillow to thy head.  
Go farther! let it serve to trample on.

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## H O M A G E      T O

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### IX

CAN it be right to give what I can give?  
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears  
As salt as mine and hear the sighing years  
Re-sighing on my lips renunciative  
Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live  
For all thy adjurations? O my fears,  
That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,  
So to be lovers; and I own, and grieve,  
That givers of such gifts as mine are, must  
Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!  
I will not soil thy purple with my dust,  
Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,  
Nor give thee any love . . . . which were unjust.  
Beloved, I only love thee! let it pass.

### X

YET, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed  
And worthy of acceptance. Fire is bright,  
Let temple burn, or flax. An equal light  
Leaps in the flame from cedar plank or weed,  
And love is fire; and when I say at need  
*I love thee . . mark! . . I love thee!* . . in thy sight  
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,  
With conscience of the new rays that proceed  
Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low  
In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures  
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.  
And what *I feel* across the inferior features  
Of what *I am*, doth flash itself, and show  
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

### XI.

AND therefore if to love can be desert,  
I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale  
As these you see, and trembling knees that fail  
To bear the burden of a heavy heart,—  
This weary minstrel-life that once was girt  
To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail  
To pipe now 'gainst the valley nightingale  
A melancholy music,—why advert  
To these things? O Belovèd, it is plain  
I am not of thy worth nor for thy place!  
And yet, because I love thee, I obtain  
From that same love this vindicating grace,  
To live on still in love, and yet in vain, . .  
To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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XII.

INDEED this very love which is my boast,  
And which, when rising up from breast to brow,  
Doth crown me with a ruby large enow  
To draw men's eyes and prove the inner cost, . . .  
This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,  
I should not love withal, unless that thou  
Hadst set me an example, shown me how,  
When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed  
And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak  
Of love even, as a good thing of my own.  
Thy soul hath snatched up mine all faint and weak,  
And placed it by thee on a golden throne,—  
And that I love (O soul, we must be meek!)  
Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

XIII.

AND wilt thou have me fashion into speech  
The love I bear thee, finding words enough,  
And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,  
Between our faces, to cast light on each?—  
I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach  
My hand to hold my spirit so far off  
From myself . . . me. . . that I should bring thee proof  
In words, of love hid in me out of reach.  
Nay, let the silence of my womanhood  
Commend my woman-love to thy belief,—  
Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,  
And rend the garment of my life, in brief,  
By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,  
Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

XIV.

IF thou must love me, let it be for nought  
Except for love's sake only. Do not say  
I love her for her smile . . . her look . . . her way  
Of speaking gently, . . . for a trick of thought  
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought  
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day?—  
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may  
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,  
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for  
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—  
A creature might forget to weep, who bore  
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!  
But love me for love's sake, that evermore  
Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

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## H O M A G E      T O

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### xv.

ACCUSE me not, beseech thee, that I wear  
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;  
For we two look two ways, and cannot shine  
With the same sunlight on our brow and hair.  
On me thou lookest, with no doubting care,  
As on a bee shut in a crystalline,—  
Since sorrow has shut me safe in love's divine,  
And to spread wing and fly in the outer air  
Were most impossible failure, if I strove  
To fail so. But I look on thee . . . on thee . . .  
Beholding, besides love, the end of love,  
Hearing oblivion beyond memory!  
As one who sits and gazes from above,  
Over the rivers to the bitter sea.

### xvi.

AND yet, because thou overcomest so,  
Because thou art more noble and like a king,  
Thou canst prevail against my fears and fling  
Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow  
Too close against thine heart, henceforth to know  
How it shook when alone. Why, conquering  
May prove as lordly and complete a thing  
In lifting upward, as in crushing low!  
And as a vanquished soldier yields his sword  
To one who lifts him from the bloody earth,—  
Even so, Belovèd, I at last record,  
Here ends my strife. If *thou* invite me forth,  
I rise above abasement at the word.  
Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth.

### xvii.

MY poet, thou canst touch on all the notes  
God set between His After and Before,  
And strike up and strike off the general roar  
Of the rushing worlds, a melody that floats  
In a serene air purely. Antidotes  
Of medicated music, answering for  
Mankind's forlornest uses, thou canst pour  
From thence into their ears. God's will devotes  
Thine to such ends, and mine to wait on thine.  
How, Dearest, wilt thou have me for most use?  
A hope, to sing by gladly? . . . or a fine  
Sad memory, with thy songs to interfuse?  
A shade, in which to sing . . . of palm or pine?  
A grave, on which to rest from singing? . . . Choose.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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XVIII.

I NEVER gave a lock of hair away  
To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,  
Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully  
I ring out to the full brown length and say  
'Take it.' My day of youth went yesterday;  
My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee.  
Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,  
As girls do, any more. It only may  
Now shade on two pale cheeks, the mark of tears,  
Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside  
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears  
Would take this first, but Love is justified,—  
Take it thou, . . . finding pure, from all those years,  
The kiss my mother left here when she died.

XIX

THE soul's Rialto hath its merchandise;  
I barter curl for curl upon that mart,  
And from my poet's forehead to my heart,  
Receive this lock which outweighs argosies,—  
As purply black, as erst, to Pindar's eyes,  
The dim purpureal tresses gloomed athwart  
The nine white Muse-brows. For this counterpart,  
Thy bay-crown's shade, Belovèd, I surmise,  
Still lingers on thy curl, it is so black!  
Thus, with a fillet of smooth-kissing breath,  
I tie the shadow safe from gliding back,  
And lay the gift where nothing hindereth,  
Here on my heart, as on thy brow, to lack  
No natural heat till mine grows cold in death.

XX

BELOVED, my Belovèd, when I think  
That thou wast in the world a year ago,  
What time I sate alone here in the snow  
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink  
No moment at thy voice, . . . but, link by link,  
Went counting all my chains, as if that so  
They never could fall off at any blow  
Struck by thy possible hand . . . why, thus I drink  
Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,  
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night  
With personal act or speech,—nor ever cull  
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white  
Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,  
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

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## HOMAGE TO

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### XXI

SAY over again, and yet once over again,  
That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated  
Should seem 'a cuckoo-song,' as thou dost treat it,  
Remember never to the hill or plain,  
Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain,  
Comes the fresh spring in all her green completed.  
Belovèd, I, amid the darkness greeted  
By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain  
Cry . . 'Speak once more . . thou lovest!' Who can fear  
Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll—  
Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year!  
Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll  
The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,  
To love me also in silence, with thy soul.

### XXII

WHEN our two souls stand up erect and strong,  
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,  
Until the lengthening wings break into fire  
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong,  
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long  
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,—  
The angels would press on us, and aspire  
To drop some golden orb of perfect song  
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay  
Rather on earth, Belovèd,—where the unfit  
Contrarious moods of men recoil away  
And isolate pure spirits, and permit  
A place to stand and love in for a day,  
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

### XXIII

Is *it* indeed so? If I lay here dead,  
Would'st thou miss any life in losing mine?  
And would the sun for thee more coldly shine,  
Because of grave-damps falling round my head?  
I marvelled, my Belovèd, when I read  
Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine—  
But . . *so* much to thee? Can I pour thy wine  
While my hands tremble? Then my soul, instead  
Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range.  
Then, love me, Love! look on me . . breathe on me  
As brighter ladies do not count it strange,  
For love, to give up acres and degree,  
I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange  
My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth with thee!

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ROBERT BROWNING

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XXIV

LET the world's sharpness, like a clasping knife  
Shut in upon itself and do no harm  
In this close hand of Love, now soft and warm,  
And let us hear no sound of human strife  
After the click of the shutting. Life to life—  
I lean upon thee, Dear, without alarm,  
And feel as safe as guarded by a charm  
Against the stab of worldlings, who if rife  
Are weak to injure. Very whitely still  
The lilies of our lives may reassure  
Their blossoms from their roots, accessible  
Alone to heavenly dews that drop not fewer;  
Growing straight, out of man's reach, on the hill.  
God only, who made us rich, can make us poor.

XXV

A HEAVY heart, Belovèd, have I borne  
From year to year until I saw thy face,  
And sorrow after sorrow took the place  
Of all those natural joys as lightly worn  
As the stringed pearls . . . each lifted in its turn  
By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace  
Were changed to long despairs, till God's own grace  
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn  
My heavy heart. Then *thou* didst bid me bring  
And let it drop adown thy calmly great  
Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing  
Which its own nature doth precipitate,  
While thine doth close above it, mediating  
Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.

XXVI

I LIVED with visions for my company,  
Instead of men and women, years ago,  
And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know  
A sweeter music than they played to me.  
But soon their trailing purple was not free  
Of this world's dust,—their lutes did silent grow,  
And I myself grew faint and blind below  
Their vanishing eyes. Then THOU didst come . . . to be,  
Belovèd, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,  
Their songs, their splendours, (better, yet the same,  
As river-water hallowed into fonts)  
Met in thee, and from out thee overcame  
My soul with satisfaction of all wants—  
Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

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## H O M A G E      T O

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### XXVII

MY own Belovèd, who hast lifted me  
From this drear flat of earth where I was thrown,  
And, in betwixt the languid ringlets, blown  
A life-breath, till the forehead hopefully  
Shines out again, as all the angels see,  
Before thy saving kiss! My own, my own,  
Who camest to me when the world was gone,  
And I who looked for only God found *thee!*  
I find thee; I am safe, and strong, and glad.  
As one who stands in dewless asphodel,  
Looks backward on the tedious time he had  
In the upper life.—so I, with bosom swell,  
Make witness, here, between the good and bad,  
That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well.

### XXVIII

MY letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and white!—  
And yet they seem alive and quivering  
Against my tremulous hands which loose the string  
And let them drop down on my knee to-night.  
This said, . . . he wished to have me in his sight  
Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring  
To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,  
Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . .  
Said, *Dear, I love thee;* and I sank and quailed  
As if God's future thundered on my past.  
This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled  
With lying at my heart that beat too fast.  
And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,  
If what this said, I dared repeat at last!

### XXIX

I THINK' of thee!—my thoughts do twine and bud  
About thee, as wild vines, about a tree,  
Put out broad leaves, and soon there's nought to see  
Except the straggling green which hides the wood.  
Yet, O my palm-tree, be it understood  
I will not have my thoughts instead of thee  
Who art dearer, better! Rather instantly  
Renew thy presence. As a strong tree should,  
Rustle thy boughs and set thy trunk all bare.  
And let these bands of greenery which insphere thee  
Drop heavily down, . . . burst, shattered, everywhere!  
Because, in this deep joy to see and hear thee  
And breathe within thy shadow a new air,  
I do not think of thee—I am too near thee.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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XXX

I SEE thine image through my tears to-night,  
And yet to-day I saw thee smiling. How  
Refer the cause?—Belovèd, is it thou,  
Or I? who makes me sad? The acolyte  
Amid the chanted joy and thankful rite,  
May so fall flat, with pale insensate brow,  
On the altar-stair. I hear thy voice and vow  
Perplexed, uncertain, since thou art out of sight,  
As he, in his swooning ears, the choir's amen.  
Belovèd, dost thou love? or did I see all  
The glory as I dreamed, and fainted when  
Too vehement light dilated my ideal,  
For my soul's eyes? Will that light come again,  
As now these tears come . . . falling hot and real?

XXXI

THOU comest! all is said without a word.  
I sit beneath thy looks, as children do  
In the noon-sun, with souls that tremble through  
Their happy eyelids from an unaverr'd  
Yet prodigal inward joy. Behold, I erred  
In that last doubt! and yet I cannot rue  
The sin most, but the occasion . . . that we two  
Should for a moment stand unministered  
By a mutual presence. Ah, keep near and close,  
Thou dovelike help! and, when my fears would rise,  
With thy broad heart serenely interpose.  
Brood down with thy divine sufficiencies  
These thoughts which tremble when bereft of those  
Like callow birds left desert to the skies.

XXXII

THE first time that the sun rose on thine oath  
To love me, I looked forward to the moon  
To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon  
And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.  
Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;  
And, looking on myself, I seemed not one  
For such man's love!—more like an out of tune  
Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth  
To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste  
Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.  
I did not wrong myself so, but I placed  
A wrong on *thee*. For perfect strains may float  
'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced,—  
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

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H O M A G E      T O

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## XXXIII

YES, call me by my pet name! let me hear  
The name I used to run at, when a child,  
From innocent play, and leave the cowslips piled,  
To glance up in some face that proved me dear  
With the look of its eyes. I miss the clear  
Fond voices, which, being drawn and reconciled  
Into the music of Heaven's undefiled  
Call me no longer. Silence on the bier,  
While I call God . . . call God!—So let thy mouth  
Be heir to those who are now exanimate.  
Gather the north flowers to complete the south,  
And catch the early love up in the late.  
Yes, call me by that name,—and I, in truth,  
With the same heart, will answer, and not wait.

## XXXIV

WITH the same heart, I said, I'll answer thee  
As those, when thou shalt call me by my name—  
Lo, the vain promise! is the same, the same,  
Perplexed and ruffled by life's strategy?  
When called before, I told how hastily  
I dropped my flowers or break off from a game,  
To run and answer with the smile that came  
At play last moment, and went on with me  
Through my obedience. When I answer now,  
I drop a grave thought,—break from solitude;—  
Yet still my heart goes to thee . . . ponder how . . .  
Not as to a single good, but all my good!  
Lay thy hand on it, best one, and allow  
That no child's foot could run fast as this blood.

## XXXV

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange  
And be all to me? Shall I never miss  
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss  
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,  
When I look up, to drop on a new range  
Of walls and floors . . . another home than this?  
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is  
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?  
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,  
To conquer grief, tries more . . . as all things prove;  
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.  
Alas I have grieved so I am hard to love.  
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,  
And fold within, the wet wings of thy dove.

---

ROBERT BROWNING

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XXXVI

WHEN we met first and loved, I did not build  
Upon the event with marble. Could it mean  
To last, a love set pendulous between  
Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled,  
Distrusting every light that seemed to gild  
The onward path, and feared to overlean  
A finger even. And, though I have grown serene  
And strong since then, I think that God has willed  
A still renewable fear . . O love, O troth . .  
Lest these clasped hands should never hold,  
This mutual kiss drop down between us both  
As an unowned thing, once the lips being cold.  
And Love, be false! if *he*, to keep one oath,  
Must lose one joy, by his life's star foretold.

XXXVII

PARDON, oh, pardon, that my soul should make  
Of all that strong divineness which I know  
For thine and thee, an image only so  
Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break.  
It is that distant years which did not take  
Thy sovereignty, recoiling with a blow,  
Have forced my swimming brain to undergo  
Their doubt and dread, and blindly to forsake  
Thy purity of likeness and distort  
Thy worthiest love to a worthless counterfeit.  
As if a shipwrecked Pagan, safe in port,  
His guardian sea-god to commemorate,  
Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills a-snort  
And vibrant tale, within the temple-gate.

XXXVIII

FIRST time he kissed me, he but only kissed  
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write;  
And, ever since, it grew more clean and white, . .  
Slow to world-greetings . . quick with its 'Oh, list,'  
When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst  
I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,  
Than that first kiss. The second passed in height  
The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,  
Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!  
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,  
With sanctifying sweetness did precede.  
The third upon my lips was folded down  
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,  
I have been proud and said, 'My love, my own.'

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## H O M A G E      T O

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### XXXIX

BECAUSE thou hast the power and own'st the grace  
To look through and behind this mask of me,  
(Against which years have beat thus blanchingly  
With their rains,) and behold my soul's true face,—  
The dim and weary witness of life's race!—  
Because thou hast the faith and love to see,  
Through that same soul's distracting lethargy,  
The patient angel waiting for a place  
In the new Heavens!—because nor sin nor woe,  
Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighbourhood,  
Nor all which others viewing, turn to go, . . .  
Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed, .  
Nothing repels thee, . . . Dearest, teach me so  
To pour out gratitude, as thou dost, good.

### XL

OH yes! they love through all this world of ours!  
I will not gainsay love, called love forsooth.  
I have heard love talked in my early youth,  
And since, not so long back but that the flowers  
Then gathered, smell still. Mussulmans and Giaours  
Throw kerchiefs at a smile, and have no ruth  
For any weeping. PolypHEME's white tooth  
Slips on the nut, if, after frequent showers,  
The shell is over-smooth,—and not so much  
Will turn the thing called love, aside to hate,  
Or else to oblivion. But thou art not such  
A lover, my Belovè! thou canst wait  
Through sorrow and sickness, to bring souls to touch,  
And think it soon when others cry, "Too late!"

### XLI

I THANK all who have loved me in their hearts,  
With thanks and love from mine. Deep thanks to all  
Who paused a little near the prison-wall,  
To hear my music in its louder parts,  
Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's  
Or temple's occupation, beyond call.  
But thou, who, in my voice's sink and fall,  
When the sob took it, thy divinest Art's  
Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot,  
To hearken what I said between my tears, . . .  
Instruct me how to thank thee!—Oh, to shoot  
My soul's full meaning into future years,  
That *they* should lend it utterance, and salute  
Love that endures, from Life that disappears!

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ROBERT BROWNING

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XLII

*'My future will not copy fair my past'*—  
I wrote that once; and thinking at my side  
My ministering life-angel justified  
The word by his appealing look upcast  
To the white throne of God, I turned at last,  
And there, instead, saw thee, not unallied  
To angels in thy soul!—Then I, long tried  
By natural ills, received the comfort fast,  
While budding, at thy sight, my pilgrim's staff  
Gave out green leaves with morning dews impearled.  
I seek no copy now of life's first half:  
Leave here the pages with long musing curled,  
And write me new my future's epigraph,  
New angel mine, unhoped for in the world!

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

XLIV

BELOVED, thou hast brought me many flowers  
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through  
And winter, and it seemed as if they grew  
In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers.  
So, in the like name of that love of ours,  
Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,  
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew  
From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers  
Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,  
And wait thy weeding: yet here's eglantine,  
Here's ivy!—take them, as I used to do  
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.  
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colours true,  
And tell thy soul, their roots are left in mine.

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H O M A G E      T O

## TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

There is delight in singing, tho' none hear  
Beside the singer; and there is delight  
In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone  
And see the prais'd far off him, far above.  
Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,  
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,  
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,  
No man hath walkt along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze  
Of Alpine highths thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

## BROWNING

BY ALFRED DOMETT

“By him whose lays like eagles, still upwheeling  
To that sky Empyrean of high feeling . . . .  
Whether he paint, all patience or pure snow,  
Pompilia’s fluttering innocence unsoiled  
In verse, tho’ fresh as dew, one *lava flow*  
In fervour,—with rich Titian dyes, aglow—  
Paint Paracelsus to grand frenzy stung:  
Quixotic dreams and fiery quackeries foiled;—  
Or of Sordello’s delicate spirit unstrung  
For action in its vast Ideal’s glare,  
Blasting the Real to its own dumb despair,  
On that Venetian water-lapped stair-flight,  
In words condensed to diamond, indite  
A lay dark—splendid as star-spangled night;—  
Still—through the pulses of the world-wide throng  
He wields, with racy life-blood beat so strong,  
Subtest Aasserter of the Soul in Song.”

—From *Ranolf and Amohia*.

---

ROBERT BROWNING

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FOR THE CENTENARY OF ROBERT  
BROWNING

BY ALFRED NOYES

Singer of hope for all the world,  
Is it still morning where thou art,  
Or are the clouds that hide thee furled  
Around a dark and silent heart?

The sacred chords thy hand could wake  
Are fallen on utter silence here,  
And hearts too little even to break  
Have made an idol of despair.

Come back! The fools that still deny  
And still destroy in hourly jest,  
Tempt not thy truth with sophistry  
But deem it still too stern a test.

Come back to England, where thy May  
Returns, but not that rapturous light!  
God is not in His heaven today  
And, with thy country, nought is right.

That bastard child of the half-lie,  
Paradox, plucks from Truth her crown;  
Tears the sure stars from out the sky,  
And hurls the grave high altars down.

And some, beneath the skin of man  
Have peered their solemn inch, and found  
The skeleton that since Time began  
Was never yet so robed and crowned,

And some go mumming through the gloom  
And laugh to find all souls a-stray;  
And some—our noblest—fold their doom  
Around them in the Roman way.

But thou, whose thought, profound and pure,  
Moved like one intricate world, sublime  
With wheeling systems, through the obscure  
Unfathomed skies of Life and Time,

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## HOMAGE TO

---

Across the Dark didst flash the Light  
Back to its primal Fount above,  
Nor dream the Nothingness of Night  
Could e'er bring forth the wings of Love,  
Or close them! Speak to us, passionate soul  
Crowned with rich grief, most strong, most wise,  
Still point our weakness to the goal  
That glorified thy constant eyes.  
No facile flatterers of the hour  
Dare mock the splendour of thy full hope,  
Whose mail-clad words in rugged power,  
Marched up, not down the Avernian slope.  
No shallow hearts dare find thy faith  
Shallow! Deep, deeper than the sea,  
Abides the Love that stormed through Death,  
And laid hold on Eternity.

*Published with author's permission.*

### GREATHEART

*(To Robert Browning)*

BY AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

Lover of earth, great-hearted son of joy,  
His the transcendent fulness of delight  
Because life's cup,—too bitter-sweet to cloy,  
Can yield no dregs to him who drinks aright.  
Let Beauty veil her strangely as she would,  
To his clear eyes, Love glowed in everything,  
And since the heart of man he understood,  
While men have hearts, he will not cease to sing.

*"Life and Living," George H. Doran Company; published with permission.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY WITTER BYNNER

To tell the truth about you, Robert Browning,  
I bring no wreath of laurel to your crowning  
Save this: that no one who has loved—can doubt you,  
    Robert Browning.

An amateur of melody and hue,  
Of marble outline and of Italy,  
Of heresies and individuals  
And every eccentricity of truth;  
And yet an Englishman, a healthy brute  
Loving old England, thrushes and the dawn;  
A scholar loving polite gentleman;  
A man of fashion loving the universe;  
A connoisseur loving dead artists' lives,  
Their names, their labors and their enemies;  
A poet loving all the ways of words;  
A human being giving love as love,  
Denying death and proving happiness;—

When you love women, because youth loves women,  
And when you love a woman, because heart  
Understands heart through more than youth or age  
Or time, and when you marvellously become  
The man whom Carlyle and whom Landor love—  
You are life's poet by a poet's life. . . .  
But when you set yourself about with words,  
Abracadabra, bric-a-brac and the dust  
Of piled confusion, toying with obsolete  
Prescriptions, and with owlish lenses hide  
Your eyes until you marvellously become  
A ponderous, pondering apothecary—  
You dispense remedies, but not to me!  
Let me take down your bulky book of records,  
And find those certain pages where you tell  
The beauty of a shoulder or reveal  
The pure and simple permanence of love!  
It is enough to learn, by a lazy glance  
Through other passages, how you conserve  
The true susceptibility and pathos  
Of bishops, mediums and murderers,

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## HOMAGE TO

---

Manage the rhythm of fantastic souls,  
Mark in the fault something to profit by:  
Challenge the far perfection resident  
In imperfection's opportunity,  
And—more magnanimous than most of us—  
Finding yourself in all humanity,  
Forgive humanity for what you find.  
You see, I know your text and care for it!  
And though I will not hunt for it through all  
Your dark old corners, I shall wait outside  
And watch you through the windows and admire  
The amazing industry with which you piece  
Your manuscripts together to maintain  
And to corroborate with many proofs  
Your cheerful confidence in any man.  
—Who would has heard me rank you, Robert Browning.  
I bring no wreath of laurel to your crowning  
Save this: that for your confidence—I thank you,  
    Robert Browning.

*Published with author's permission.*

## BROWNING

BY RICHARD BURTON

Love that is triumph, music that leaps;  
Glad on the heights, unabashed in the deeps;  
Valiant and splendid, great righter of wrong,  
Hail to the militant hero of Song!

*From Boston Browning Society 1909-1910, p. 18; published with permission of the Society and the author.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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IN PRAISE OF ROBERT BROWNING

(*On His Centenary*)

BY CALE YOUNG RICE

Away with trivial bays,  
With wreaths and dithyrambs,  
Upon this day of a myriad days  
When a great heart came to walk earth's ways  
And sing it free of shams.  
To sing it free of the pale complaint  
Of souls that will not climb;  
And free of the petty coward taint  
Of the cavillers at Time.  
To gaze so clearly far  
Into its mystic clod  
As to be sure it is a star  
Tilled by the touch of God!

*From "Wraiths and Realities," with permission of author  
and of the Publisher.*

THE TWO NIGHTINGALES

(*Of the boy Browning, May, 1826*)

BY ARTHUR UPSON

'Twas in an English garden I heard tell  
How, in the odorous early Spring one day,  
Book-laden, the boy's mother bore away  
Homeward from town to him the potent spell  
Of Shelley's airy verses; how it fell,  
By chance, with them fair other poems lay—  
Those of one Keats; how thus the marvellous May  
Broke on the dreaming boy of Camberwell  
With new ecstatic music; and, that night,  
As down his father's garden the lad strolled  
Where fresh laburnums rained their pallid gold  
Beneath the moon, how, sharing his delight,  
Like spirits from out far, ringing Doric dales,  
There sang to him two tranced nightingales!

*London, May, 1907.*

*Published with permission of Boston Browning Society  
and of Mrs. Arthur Upson.*

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H O M A G E      T O

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BROWNING TO BEN EZRA

*A Centenary Soliloquy*

BY PERCY MACKAYE

I

A hundred years!—Hardly I understand:  
Unriddle it, Rabbi. Through the Abbey stones  
Hearken—the hushed and reverent monotones,  
The shuffled feet, that pause! “Here lie his bones,  
Who passed away  
From earth, perhaps to heaven,  
Aged seventy-seven;  
Born on this self-same day,  
The seventh May,  
A century gone.”—Look, Rabbi! In my hand  
I hold this little watch they call their world,  
Open it with my thumb, where lo! each cog,  
Each golden wheel, on star-gemmed axis whirled,  
Pulses with delicate action.—Pray you, jog  
My laggard mind once more.—They state, you say,  
This was my timepiece; on this crystal face  
I’d pore, and through dim introspections trace  
The portent of the tickings underneath,  
The mainspring of the action. May be so,  
For you should know, Ben Ezra. All I know  
Is, that the ticks grew fainter, as it slipped  
Under my pillow. Then I fell asleep,  
And have been busy dreaming. That was *death*,  
They say,—death. Sudden the quick hair-spring skipped  
A turn, trembled, and stopped short.—Much too deep  
For me!—Somehow I don’t conceive the soul  
Like to a watch unwound. Yet now, they say,  
I am a poet who has passed away,  
With many common millions, to a goal  
Unkenned.—Here’s Limbo, then; and I, a shade,  
Soliloquize now, in this cloistral corner,  
Among pale forms of other ghosts forlorner,  
With you, Ben Ezra, whom alive I made  
The Rabbi of my rhyme.—A quaint conceit!  
Suppose we grant it. So, then! Let us sit  
On dust of kings and make a rhyme of it  
Together—one dead poet and one rabbi  
Conceived and born of him. While you keep tab, I

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## HOMAGE TO

---

Will muse the elegy, and score our text:  
*R. Browning to Ben Ezra*; adding next:  
*Suggested by the former's centenary*,  
And after that—lest precious ears be vexed—

*Apologies for defunct vocabulary.*

### II

The question I would stress, then—pray allow—  
Is this: To pass away, is it to cease?  
But if so, *how* to cease? I said just now  
That, since my pillow muffled this timepiece,  
I have been busy dreaming. Ha, those dreams!  
In what frail shallows, what austere triremes,  
Unchartered cruisers, barks adventuresome,  
I have put forth on unimagined seas,  
And sailed—with what courageous companies!  
Nay, on no phantom ships! No guest needs fear  
A skinny-handed ancient mariner  
In me. I entertain with dice of doom  
No spectral crews. My fellow-voyagers were—  
And are, and shall be still—rich-blooded men,  
Rare-hearted women, lovers of this life  
And wrestlers with it, reckless of the strain.  
My visionary barks, those be my books,  
And I, whose bones consort here with the spooks,  
Am admiral there of dreamy argosies  
That ply 'twixt earth and heaven their perilous merchandise.

Perilous, yes; for dreams are perilous craft  
When they be manned by fierce doubts, fore and aft,  
Whose mutinous foreheads scan the heaven for signs,  
And menace their commander: "You, who planned  
Our questing voyage, show us the land—your land  
Of God, His promise! All the lone sea-lines  
Are dim with setting stars and stark with death;  
Yet you, who hold the rudder, answer *Faith!*  
And, once more, only *Faith?*" Thus curse my crews!  
I share their hearts, but overmaster them,  
And hold the rudder straight;  
Till now—a star above each plumèd stem—  
Lo, where my galleons, guided by their Muse,  
The surging planet circumnavigate—

---

## ROBERT BROWNING

---

Doubt kindling nobler doubt, faith quelling faith,  
Forms flung to revolution, creeds to rack,  
Old cities of dead empires put to sack,  
Love founding lordlier kingdoms in the future's track!  
So, Rabbi, to our question, if you please:  
Is sailing thus—to cease?  
The ghosts demur;  
For, in the nudging vault, I hear one say:  
“Browning, the poet, who has passed away,  
This is his sepulcher.”

### III

Once a dawn-shaft from God's quiver  
Struck my soul, and from its embers  
Flashed a star of song forever.  
Then the dawn passed. Who remembers?  
Not remember Pippa?—Pippa who, at sun-up,  
Rose in her bare attic, while the east boiled gold!  
With her rising, see, the morning roses run up  
Clambering live and warm, concealing the night-mold.—

Pippa, she who sang till little Asolo  
Widened out its walls—like arms, that reach in pity  
To nestle lonely things that yearn for love—till, lo;  
Vines of Asolo enwall the heavenly city!

Pippa, she was Luigi, Ottima was Pippa,  
Mighty Monsignor, chafer, bee, and weevil;  
Life redeemed from listlessness, innocence from evil,  
Like the cinder-girl that wore the crystal slipper.

Well, well, Rabbi, so  
Now, as long ago,  
Even thoughts of Pippa  
Lilt another music, breathe an afterglow.  
What, then! Will they say  
She, that passed in song, she, too has passed away?

Trust me: as I used to sit and ponder,  
Songs, songs, songs she sang me, winged of wonder,  
Flitting sunward, till they quite forsook—  
Like happy birds from open cages—  
My black-barred pages.

---

ROBERT BROWNING

---

But shyly three and four, with slantwise wing,  
Dartled from heaven back, and hovering  
Around my head,  
Sung my dear earth instead,  
Then nested down, beaks spilling, in my book,  
Splashing its margin with God's meadow-dew.—  
How cage and heart clapped to!  
When lo, all lamely, came a scant-winged few  
That fluttered, just outside the closing covers,  
Too late to slip between, and lingered nigh,  
Teasing with matin-tunes the twilit memory.  
Listen! There pipes one, now! Hark, while it hovers!

On passion's flower  
I poised for an hour,  
A little hour long,  
Ere I passed in song.

*Stay!* cried my lover  
Forsaken: *Faded*  
*Are love's endeavor*  
*And all that made it!*  
*Dead—dead!*  
But far overhead  
Where faint stars hung,  
And low o'er the grass  
By the eddying river,  
Where poising moon-moths flickered  
and swung,  
I called to my lover  
Over and over:

*I poise, I poise, I poise forever,*  
*Because I pass.*

IV

To poise—to pass away!  
Rabbi, beyond the high groins, rose and gray,  
Dimmed by the Minster's adumbrated day,  
How, browed in silence, broods my centenary,  
In silence, bred of dust  
And the dank charnel's must,  
That wraps these bones! Yes, *he* is passed away  
Forever more; nor London's warping mist,  
Nor Italy's keen amethyst,

---

---

H O M A G E      T O

---

Shall cast his shadow among men; and soon  
No lingering friend to care, nor old contemporary.—  
*He*, I mean, whom once they pointed at  
In Rome and Florence: poet-putterer  
Among old pictures,  
Uncouth utterer  
Of obscure strictures,  
Styleless stutterer  
(Quoth his critics,  
Itching with their own enclitics),—  
Paracelsus!—how he sat  
In chilblain halls, Del Sarto-dippy,  
Robbia-mad, or Lippo Lippi,—  
Like some mage of alchemy,  
Grinding, in his cracked-brain crucible,  
Tortuous rhymes from radiant Titians  
Delving for the thence-deducible  
Dialogue soliloquy:  
Not to mention those musicians!  
Through the dilettantes' drawl  
At the Countess' musicale,  
What surmise you, English ogler,  
Of visions dreamed by old Abt Vogler,  
When you stare (nor note his frowning,  
Conscious of your own silk gowning)  
And pour at tea for Mr. Browning?  
Dust to dust: the large, the little,  
Ashes both! Who cares a tittle,  
At the teas of Goethe, Horace,  
Who wore satin, or who wore lace?  
Ashes all! even such as—Wait!  
What of *him*—even him, the speaker,  
Whose spirit, invoked, comes muffled through this  
weaker  
Organ of an alien poet,  
Pale, yet not all impassionate,  
Sounding subconscious chords, that flood and over-  
flow it,—  
Of him, *my* spirit, Rabbi,—what of him,  
My poising soul? Ah, since I died  
How has this soul of mine been multiplied  
By minds made pregnant with that seraph's fire,  
Whose touch conceptual made aspire  
Mine own from all the ages!  
Wherfore I deem—

---

ROBERT BROWNING

---

No individual ghost,  
Moored on some drifting coast,  
Yearning from out the dark for daylight lost,  
For youth's wild torch,  
Wind-blown with joyous rages,  
Hope's lifted latch and laughter in the porch,—  
Not even now  
For dear exchange of love's undying vow  
With her that was the Aurora of my life,  
My freed soul longs. For I, that lived, grew old  
And died, am born again in beings manifold,  
By grace of that which, once expressed,  
Bequeaths to them the beautiful, the best,  
That bloomed of me;  
Whereby immortally  
Their passions now partake  
Of mine, of mine their raptures, their far wonder-quest.

So, in the spirits I pass through,  
Still I create my own anew,  
Broadened in scope; still I awake  
Refreshed, in world-awakened eyes  
Of all whom mine with thought imbue;  
Still in my critics criticise,  
Till, stretching the thralled spirit's cramp,  
My art becomes an Arabian lamp  
That, touched,—behold the genie rise!  
Who bows his blazing form, and cries:  
“Of all my Master's wealth—the true,  
The beautiful, the strong, the wise—  
Mortal, what may his servant bring?”

Hist, Rabbi!—What bird's that?—I smell the spring.  
Soft!—Could it be my silk-girl caroling?

Never alone,  
Lover of joy,  
Delicate scorner  
Of death and his dances,  
Whether you be  
Girl or boy,  
Rapturous mourner  
Of life and her fancies,  
Never may you, never alone,

---

## H O M A G E      T O

---

Utter your ecstasy,  
Make your moan.

Garland your hair;  
Wind, come unwind it!  
Hide away care;  
Kind heart, come find it!

Winter, you gnome,  
Shrunken and shrilly,  
Shut Love in her tomb;  
Tut!—willy, nilly,  
Love through the loam  
Unlocks with a lily!

Starlight or stone,  
Nothing's its own!

v

Fluent through all flows all, as the Greek saith:  
The drowned stone ripples the starlight, even as death  
The living waters,  
With widening discs of light. No sparrow falls  
But gray-stoled choirs revive his matinals  
With incense fresh of dawn.—You, Rabbi, friend,  
Soul-fellow, busy with me to the end,  
Crunching with poet-pestles and rhyme-mortars  
Comundrums for the mind to apprehend,  
Bear witness with me to this paradox:  
What's permanent must pass. All spirit-shocks,  
Numbness and pain, arise  
Conceiving otherwise.  
For Beauty is the flowing of the soul  
Without impediment, the effect being joy;  
So with a ripple may reveal her whole  
Eternal ocean. But the child says: "See!  
My earth is stable; sun and stars spin wild."  
Not so the man: "Our earth spins dizzily  
Round the fixed sun." The poet (man and child)  
Peers in the sun, imagining he sees—  
Beyond his face—the shadowy vortices,  
Vast suctions and compulsions of the soul.  
"Beyond the sun," he sings, "beyond—our goal  
Is God!" Last pries the seer: "Him whom so far

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ROBERT BROWNING

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Ye seek, yourselves consider what you are  
And find Him: stars aspiring *to be*,  
Life from itself evolving soul—such He!  
Time's runner, not Time's stake; Spring's sap, not sod;  
Man's orbit, not his planet—such is God."

Vouch, then, Ben Ezra, through the texts we glazed  
Of earth's philosophies, I still opposed  
The fixed, immutable. *To slake his thirst,*  
You said, there lives our soul's utility—  
His thirst unquenchable, for Whom also she,  
My silk-girl, sang: *There is no last nor first!*  
Therefore through all  
The chambers of His spirit, as I passed  
In changing rôles—to lift the dim tent-flap  
(As David) and behold where hung huge Saul,  
Supine,  
Gigantic, serpentine,  
From the cross-beam; or, through the black storm-gap,  
Panting beneath a woman's hair  
(As Sebald), to watch—now here, now there—  
Blind lightnings stab the dark; thence to unfold  
Before the quiet eyes of Cleon  
His epos on its burning plates of gold;  
Else watch, in Spring of another eon  
(Curled like the finger of an infant faun),  
The prying crocus crimson through the lawn,  
Idling, without other care,  
In England, when my April's there;—  
Still it was mine, and *is*, in dreams  
To search beyond the world that seems,  
And flash before my fellow-men,  
Kindling His image to their ken,  
Glimpses of that God-man, who wills yet to *become*,  
Ever for Whom,  
In future as in past,  
There is nor first nor last.

VI

But hark! Above our vault,  
Rabbi, the footsteps halt,  
The organ rolls the chant processional.  
Relinquish here this dust;  
Accomplish there Time's trust;  
Ascend with me beyond this centenary.

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## H O M A G E      T O

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Go forth, for we are young!  
Time's song is yet unsung;  
Let our glad voices mingle with God's mass.  
You, Rabbi, on my right,  
Before us both—His light:  
Through men's dear world, with Pippa, still I pass!

*Published with author's permission.*

## IMAGINATION

(*Written for the Occasion*)

BY EDWIN MARKHAM

Blithe Fancy lightly builds with airy hands  
Or on the edges of the darkness peers,  
Breathless and frightened at the Voice she hears:  
Imagination (lo! the sky expands)  
Travels the blue arch and Cimmerian sands—  
Homeless on earth, the pilgrim of the spheres,  
The rush of light before the hurrying years,  
The voice that cries in unfamiliar lands.

Men weigh the moons that flood with eerie light  
The dusky vales of Saturn—wood and stream;  
But who shall follow on the awful sweep  
Of Neptune through the dim and dreadful deep?  
Onward he wanders in the unknown night,  
And we are shadows moving in a dream.

*From New York Browning Society, 1912, p. 3; published with permission of Society and the author.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

BY SARA TEASDALE

*(For R. B.'s Anniversary)*

I said, "I shall weave my poet  
A song of shining words"—  
But thro' the open window  
I heard the call of birds.

They said, "He wants no praising  
From those who stay indoors;  
Come into the house with walls of air  
And grass upon the floors."

I followed the grey birds' calling  
To a shimmering poplar tree  
That shook in the silver sunlight  
The leaves that spring set free.

I thought I should sing in its shadow,  
For the leaves were half unfurled,  
But the wind went by me laughing,  
Bound for the rim of the world.

It said, "He wants no praising  
Of dreamers by a tree;  
Come follow, for I climb at last  
The hills that hide the sea."

"And if in far sea-faring  
Your praise should still be mute,  
The wordless song your heart will sing  
Is more than a well-tuned lute."

"They praise him best who follow  
In starlight or in rain  
The winding ways of wind and men  
That turn not back again."

*Published with permission of the author and of the  
Boston Transcript.*

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H O M A G E      T O

## INVOCATION

*Robert Browning 7 May, 1912*

BY PERCY MACKAYE

## I

Poet of the vast potential,  
Curious-minded, quintessential  
Prober of passion, ample-hearted  
Lover of lovers, virile-arted  
Robert Browning, plotter of plays,  
Leaven us in these latter days!

*Now in rebirth,  
Renewing Time's festa  
Spring—the wild quester—  
Quickens the earth.*

## II

Not mere being, but becoming  
Makes us vital. Stript from numbing  
Vestiture of self-complacence  
Naked for our soul's renascence,  
Robert Browning, riddler of hearts,  
Pierce us with your singing darts!

*Sharp through the sod,  
Flower-tipped for His aiming,  
Shoot now the flaming  
Spear-heads of God.*

## III

Not our prayer-stool, but our passion  
Makes us holy. Thus to fashion  
Psalm and *Credo* to a human  
Ritual of Man and Woman,  
Robert Browning, purger of souls,  
Heap on us your passion-coals!

*So let aspire—  
As now this young season—  
Spirit and reason  
In flower and fire!*

*Published with author's permission.*

*Page Thirty-eight*

## AN INVOCATION

(*On the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of  
Robert Browning*)

BY FRANCIS MEDHURST

Rabbi Ben Ezra—thou, whose valiant spirit  
Hath plumbed the riddle of the rolling spheres,  
Who, far aloof from mortal hopes and fears,  
The fulness of thy calling dost inherit—  
If in some wondrous wise our thought may reach  
The region where thou dwellest, and our speech  
May pierce the lofty calm of thine estate,  
Take this the homage from our hearts upwinging!  
Know, mighty master, that thy message ringing  
Still lifts us skyward, thine ensample great  
Still shows ideals that we strive in singing  
To keep inviolate.

Thou wast both seer and prophet; through the thunder  
Of all thy deep-mouthing harmonies there runs  
A strain pythionic that beyond the suns  
Thrills in thy major C, the tone of wonder.  
Ah! Couldst thou lend it us for one brief hour,  
Whisper within our ears that word of power,  
Should we not sing, indeed, who now must fail,  
Strive how we may, to catch the chords upwelling  
From those high choirs wherfrom thy songs are swelling,  
Who find our feeble notes of no avail  
To voice the half-formed thought for whose forthtelling  
Our harps are all too frail.

Behold, the mighty bards are wrapped in slumber;  
No soul titanic sets the world on fire;  
Apollo's fane is bare, unstrung his lyre!  
The tale of all our minstrels one might number  
And find none fit to mate his muse to thine;  
Our altar fires bear flames but half divine.  
Strive, if thou may'st, to burst the bonds that bar!  
Bid thy strong spirit, clothed with raiment mortal,  
Re-enter life by birth's unfolding portal  
And, in thy pity for our voiceless star,  
Inform anew some singer all immortal  
In one last avatar!

*From the Boston Evening Transcript, May 4, 1912; published with the permission of the editor.*

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HOMAGE TO

## BROWNING

BY MADISON CAWEIN

Master of human harmonies, where song  
And harp and violin and flute accord;  
Each instrument proclaiming you its lord  
There in the deathless Orchestra of Song;  
Albeit at times your music may sound wrong  
To our dull senses, and its meaning barred  
To mortal understanding—never marred  
Is your high message, clear, of trumpet tongue.

Poet, revealer, who both soon and late  
Within an age of doubt kept strong your faith,  
Crying your cry that with the world all's well—  
What wizard powers upon your word await,  
To rout the darkness from the House of Death,  
And fill it, triumphant, with Life's organ swell!

*From "The Cup of Comus."* Published with permission  
of all parties concerned. Recognition is made to Mrs.  
Rose de Vaux-Roger of the Cameo Press of New York,  
Otto A. Rothert, Literary Executor to Madison Ca-  
wein and to Madison (formerly Preston) Caæwein, sole  
heir to the poet.

## TO BROWNING

BY EDWIN MARKHAM

You plumbed the timeless tides that wash the shoal  
Of Time, and from your cliff of vision saw  
The streaming Will whose other name is Law.  
You sang the urge of the imperious soul,  
Winged with its dream, and pressing toward the goal—  
Sang of the soul whose flying steps are fate  
As it goes searching for the secret gate,  
Where each must bring his very all for toll.  
O Poet, vanished from our mortal day,  
Send back some signal from the upward way,  
Send back a whisper from the seraph height:  
What word for man? will he at last arrive?  
Answer again out of your larger light:  
The stars are crumbling—will the soul survive?

*New York Browning Society, 1912; published with per-  
mission of author and of the Society.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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THE CAMBERWELL GARDEN

BY RICHARD BURTON

(*Browning was born May 7th, at Camberwell, a suburb of London*)

May hath her own blithe beauty, nor doth need  
The other loveliness of human deed  
And human fellowship; yet doubly fair  
She seems to brood o'er Camberwell, since there  
Once walked the lad who made of blooms and birds  
His cronies, knew their winsome ways and words.

Far did he wander; many a mile away  
And many a year, he saw the face of May  
Rosy, recurrent, in Italian nooks  
Uplifting summer arms and siren looks.  
This month of melody and warmth and shine  
Is welcome to the heart of man as wine!

Ah, but at Camberwell each sound and sight  
And scent—sure ministers to his delight—  
Were interwoven with dewy memories  
Stronger and sweeter than from overseas;  
And whereso'er his feet in faring turned,  
Whiles, for that garden-place he must have yearned.

He who comes back to greet an old, dear friend,  
And finds him gone, knows it is not the end,  
But lovingly awaits the gladder day  
When all friends gather in from far-away.  
So maiden May comes back and waits for him  
In grass and flower and every greening limb.

\* \* \* \* \*

Long gone the garden, and the singer too  
Sleeps elsewhere; but still the sky is blue,  
Spring scents are rife, old magic still beguiles,  
And May in Camberwell recalls, and smiles.

*Published with the permission of the author.*

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## HOMAGE TO

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### A BIRTHDAY

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER

Forces unknown of birthdays new—  
Life's miracles are they!  
A hundred years have but found true  
The worth of one May day.

Then, that most puny, potent thing—  
A baby life was born,  
Whose unguessed force-of-joy to sing,  
Lasts like a May unworn.

I think the ripened soul that sung—  
“Grow old along with me!”—  
Cries,—Wonder is from each instant sprung!  
Keep your soul young to see!

*From New York Browning Society, 1912, p 121; published with permission of the Society and of the author.*

### BROWNING

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

So many books are gone, lost in the mind,  
Nurture forgotten; once on fancy's tongue  
Sweet to the taste; many a honeyed song.  
Yea! and deep-thoughted fruit with bitter rind:  
Browning goes not. As when a boy, I find  
Still the old magic master loved so long;  
Here still the strength that still can make me strong,  
Still the delight of mountains still behind.

And still among the rocks and stars of speech  
The sudden silver singing of a bird,  
Perched on the craggy ridges of his thought,  
Too high 'twould seem to sing—still out of reach  
Of the world's ear, that hardly yet hath caught  
The music hidden in the gnarled word.

*From the Boston Evening Transcript, May 4, 1912; published with permission of the editor.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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IN PRAISE OF BROWNING

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER

Of loveliness, and all the fair  
In Life, the perfect, choice, and rare—  
The bloom of deeds,  
Most poets tell:  
They with the love of Beauty swell  
The heart of Man; and this is well.  
But Browning moves to love of life,  
Oft-failing yet aspiring strife  
Tow'rd Beauty's seeds—  
The sleeping spore  
Such love of life can wake to soar  
Within each heart: O this is more!

With growing light through ages shine  
The visions of the Love Divine  
Of God made man:  
So seers still win  
A hope for mortals, spite of sin,  
And life is bless'd since that hath been.  
But Browning's vivid eye discerns  
God in each heart where pure love burns:  
Where Spirit ran,  
Flashing strange spells,  
Transcendent love in might upwells;  
God's witness thus in each Soul dwells.

*Published with permission of the author.*

BROWNING

BY ROBERT ADGER BOWEN

As when amid some vast orchestral din  
The organ's deep majestic sound is heard;  
So doth thy voice with Life's great mystery stirred,  
Sweep o'er the strife of flute and violin.

*From Bookman, Vol. 4; published with the permission  
of the editor.*

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H O M A G E      T O

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TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY AGNES LEE

He who leaves a glimmer of his soul  
In a bit of marble, in a song,  
He shall win the unseen aureole  
Set above the stars the ages long,  
And the fleeting import of his days  
Echoes of eternity shall praise.

We of earth thy mastery would hail,  
Iron hand that shook the gates of art,  
Crumpled rock to ridge's flowering trail,  
Yours, O feet, that, following no chart,  
Forged a future, or in spaces free  
Walked the winding floor of some old sea.

Poet of life's ordinances deep—  
Cities lying restless in the night,  
Tossing, turning ere they fall asleep—  
Meadow-streams in peace of pale moonlight,  
We, the tossing city, we, the stream,  
Share thy noble heritage of dream!

Ah! There is a name within thy name  
Known to love and lyric everywhere,  
Lettered on the heart in strokes of flame,  
Hers who wrought in love's encloistered air  
Gathering the guerdon of her hours,  
Holding up to thee and heaven her flowers.

Call we unto her, thou art in sight,  
Call we unto thee, she glides to us.  
And before the garden of delight  
Where forever song is tremulous  
Two belovèd forms Time radiates,  
Passing in together through the gates.

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY HELEN A. CLARKE

"Say not we know, but rather that we love,  
And so we know enough." Thus deeply spoke  
The Sage; and in men's stunted hearts awoke  
A haunting fear, for fain are they to prove  
Their life, their God, with yeas and nays that move  
The mind's uncertain flow. Then fierce outbreak,—  
Knowledge, the child of pain shall we revoke?  
The guide wherewith men climb to things above?  
Nay, calm your fears! 'Tis but the mere mind's knowing,  
The soul's alone the poet worthy deeming.  
Let mind up-build its entities of seeming  
With toil and tears! The toil is but for showing  
How much there lacks of truth. But 'tis no dreaming  
When sky throbs back to heart, with God's love beaming.

*From Browning and His Century, p. 2, published with permission of the author.*

### ROBERT BROWNING

BY AUBREY DE VERE

His feast of Life was rich—this life of ours:  
All human things 'neath yonder azure cope  
For him were deep in meaning, wide in hope.  
Nor those alone: above our brakes and bowers  
Mad dance he saw of Genii scattering flowers.  
His fancy kept a key strange gates to ope;  
Became at will that quaint kaleidoscope  
Which turns all shapes to patterns, then devours  
The last to fashion new. His grasp was large;  
He knew that, with the suffering heart of man  
Compared, all matter-worlds but fill a span.  
His Song had shafts that pierced a spirit-targe;  
Its flight outsoared the agnostic poet-clan,  
Faithful to humblest Song's implicit charge.

*From Harper's New Monthly Magazine—Vol. 80:931;*  
*published with the permission of the editor.*

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H O M A G E      T O

## MESMERISM

BY EZRA POUND

*"And a cat's in the water-but."—Robert Browning.*

Aye, you're a man that! ye old mesmerizer!  
Tyn' your meanin' in seventy swadelin',  
One must of needs be a hang'd early riser  
To catch you at worm turning. Holy Odd's bodykins!

"Cat's i' the water-but!" Thought's in your verse-barrel,  
Tell us this thing rather, then we'll believe you,  
You, Master Bob Browning, spite your apparel  
Jump to your sense and give praise as we'd lief do.

You wheeze as a head-cold, long-tonseled Calliope,  
But, God! What a sight you ha' got o' our in'ards,  
Mad as a hatter but surely no Myope,  
Broad as all ocean and leanin' mankin'ards.

Heart that was big as the bowels of Vesuvius,  
Words that were wing'd as her sparks in eruption,  
Eagled and thundered as Jupiter Pluvius,  
Sound in your wind past all signs o' corruption.

Here's to you, Old Hippety-hop o' the accents,  
True to the Truth's sake and crafty dissector,  
You grabbed at the gold sure; had no need to pack cents  
Into your versicles. Clear sight's elector!

*Published with permission of the author.*

## BROWNING

BY SARA TAWNEY LEFFERTS

We love him since, a man, he makes us see  
What the true stature of a man should be;  
And being poet, he has made us feel  
That truth, the highest thing soul can reveal,  
Each in himself may find and body forth,  
Sharing the poet's mind, the poet's worth.

*Published with author's permission.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## THE TWO BOBBIES

BY BLISS CARMAN

Bobbie Burns and Bobbie Browning,  
They're the boys I'd like to see,  
Though I'm not the boy for Bobbie,  
Bobbie is the boy for me!

Bobbie Browning was the good boy;  
Turned the language inside out;  
Wrote his plays and had his days,  
Died—and held his peace, no doubt.

Poor North Bobbie was the bad boy,—  
Bad, bad, bad, bad Bobbie Burns!  
Loved and made the world his lover,  
Kissed and barleycorned by turns.

London's dweller, child of wisdom,  
Kept his council, took his toll;  
Ayrshire's vagrant paid the piper,  
Lost the game—God save his soul!

Bobbie Burns and Bobbie Browning,  
What's the difference, you see?  
Bob the lover, Bob the lawyer;  
Bobbie is the boy for me!

*From "Songs From Vagabondia;" published by kind permission of the authors.*

## ROBERT BROWNING

BY MARY A. WOODS

The paths of night and death unscathed he trod,  
His eye still fixed where, pale in whitening skies,  
Love's herald-star assured a sun's uprise,  
And darkness slain, and earth "afire with God."

*From Living Age, Vol. 231, p. 528; published with permission of the editor.*

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H O M A G E      T O

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ROBERT BROWNING'S BIRTHDAY

By WILLIAM HARMAN VAN ALLEN

For what masterpiece to praise him, Browning, poet of  
the height?

For Sordello, dreaming idly till he dies to win his fight?  
Or for Pippa, gaily singing on the streets of Asolo  
Like a bird of God whose liltings with a benison o'erflow?  
For the marvellous musicians, Abbot Vogler and the rest,  
And the painters, half-forgotten, whose dim colors gleam  
their best

In the light he pours upon them? Is it Venice, Florence,  
Rome,

Where the thaumaturge we honor shows his genius most  
at home?

Evelyn, the Duchess, Waring, Karshish, ever-blessèd  
John,

Saul, Ben Ezra, Paracelsus, exquisite Balaustion:  
All immortal, since he limned them with his own creative  
art.

But from out them all I single one as lady of my heart,  
Standing altogether lovely in her lilyed innocence.

What though hell itself assailed her? She had Michael  
for defense,

And, for pattern and consoler, holy Mary, Mother-Maid.  
So I dare to canonize her, saint and martyr, unafraid.  
And this laurel-leaf I offer to our poet, gratefully,  
Painter of Pompilia's portrait, perfect in her purity.

*Tributes read May 7, 1907, from the Boston Browning  
Society, 1909-1910, p. 11; published with permission  
of the Society.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### ROBERT BROWNING

BY MARIE ADA MOLINEUX

With the sunrise woke his life  
Flushed with all Youth's noble hopes,  
Brighter growing as the sun  
Climbed toward the mountain-slopes.

As the midday glows with light  
So his glorious manhood came;  
Giving hope to all oppressed  
Shone his beacon-light of fame.

When the sunset splendors spread  
In that loved yet alien land  
Sister, son and nations mourned—  
Glad he clasped a spirit hand!

In our night the stars that shine  
Are the memories of him;  
Through the centuries to come  
Guide they surely, nor grow dim.

*From the Boston Browning Society, 1909-1910, p. 25,  
and published with permission of the author.*

### BROWNING

BY DOROTHEA LAWRENCE MANN

Master, about whose laurelled head the years  
Fame's fairest, richest aureole have bound,  
We, too, within the closing century's round  
Would tribute bring thee in thy starry spheres,—  
Love of our hearts and all our gladdening fears  
We bring to thee, our master-warrior, found  
Triumphant in life's battles,—victor crowned  
By voice of all earth's prophets and her seers.

O magic builder, through thy strong-winged song,  
Thy pinions swept life's farthest deeps of air  
And soaring still thy living spirit sways—  
A wind of fire that stirs like a mighty throng  
Of counselling actions, visioning fair  
Body and spirit through man's length of days.

*From the Boston Evening Transcript, May 4, 1912;  
published with permission of the editor.*

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HOMAGE TO

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ROBERT BROWNING

BY MARGARET WIDDEMER

The world has said in its need since the work of the  
world began,  
"Fair is the song to heed, so what need we ask of the  
man?  
Praise for the flame-pure song; what matter the folk  
that sing?  
Let them hold duty a shame and honor a little thing!  
Words in a noble flood, and if hearts shall be crushed  
beneath,  
There must be drops of blood for the gems of the laurel-  
wreath."

But this bard stood to his word; his life to his lyre rang  
true;  
He held by the truths he spoke; the honor he praised  
he knew;  
And where his torch burned high with a steady, joyful  
spark,  
He heard a wonderful cry that sang and sobbed in the  
dark.  
His strong hands stretched to the shade and lifted the  
captive free;  
Close by him, unafraid, she chanted more perfectly.  
Down through her years till night still held they the  
great dream higher,  
Clear to the sad world's sight a pulsing of star-white fire.

Aye, through his years alone of playing the brave world  
part  
Ever the star-fire shone as vestal-clear in his heart;  
Changeless his faith and brave, and dauntless his steady  
sight,  
Watching across her grave to a tryst in the unknown  
light.  
Loyal comrade and guide, noble poet and friend,  
Yet beyond all beside true lover and knight to the end!

*From the Century Magazine, Vol. 85, No. 3, p. 416;  
published with permission of the author.*

## ON THE HEIGHTS

BY MRS. BLOOMFIELD MOORE

I cannot write for fulness of content;  
Poems are born as thunders are, from out  
The strife of elements to purify  
The stagnant air. So high I stand, so near  
To heaven, nor strife nor passion's sultry breath  
Can reach me here. When hearts are full as mine  
Few are the words which break—as bubbles break  
The quiet surface of an ocean deep  
When cradled into calm—few are the words,  
I ween, that stir the sweet content when hearts  
Are still; but, ere we met, one whom I loved,  
Back from a new-made grave, had stepped to stab  
Me in the dark; and all my wrongs arose  
To sweep my heart-strings with their myriad hands.  
As wakes the wild wind-harp, so woke my lyre,  
And strain on strain escaped until the storm  
Of tortured feeling ceased within the calm  
Of thy blest presence. Lost my riches were,  
And wrecked the barque which held my all in life.  
I stood in terror on the rock-girt shore,  
No voice to pity, and no arms to save—  
Fearing the worst, nor hoping aught of man!  
Anon, the darkness lifted, and I saw,  
Riding at anchor, on the treacherous sea,  
A noble ship, laden to edge with all  
Which makes life sweet and strong. It brought thy  
hand  
Out-stretched, to which I clung—with hungry heart  
And famished soul eating the angels' food  
Proffered in largess such as great souls yield.  
There is no wealth like that which thou hast given  
To me—no riches like the treasure thou  
Hast poured from founts exhaustless of thine own!  
I who was poor am rich! I bring my lyre  
And break it at thy feet: its need is o'er,  
Since discord and despair can strike its strings  
No more. Thou art my friend! no greater boon  
Hath earth to give than friendship such as thine!

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 108.*

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## HOMAGE TO

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### ROBERT BROWNING

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN

Bearded like some strong shipman, with a beam  
Of grey orbs glancing upward at the sky,  
O friend, thou standest, pondering thy theme,  
And watching while the troublous days blow by  
Their cloudy signs and portents; then thine eye  
Falleth, and reading with poetic gleam  
The human lineaments that round thee lie,  
Peers to the soul, and softens into dreams.  
O dweller in the winds and waves of life,  
Reader of living faces foul and fair,  
No nobler mariner may mortal meet!  
Stedfast and sure thou movest thro' the strife,  
Knowing the signs and symbols of the air,  
Yet gentle as the dews about thy feet.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 1, p. 100.*

### THE POET'S WAY

BY J. B. OLDHAM

Chain the poet to your table,  
Bind his soul with silken chains,  
While you probe with patient science  
In the bell-shaped bit of brains  
For the secret source whence springeth  
Such a marvel of sweet strains;

Still the reason will be hidden  
From your analytic gaze  
Why the poet sometimes uses  
Such queer complicated phrase,  
For a poet moves as God does,  
In a thousand secret ways.

*From Browning Society Papers, Vol. 11, p. 329.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## TO BROWNING

BY CLEMENT G. CLARKE

Thou are so sure! and yet thou speak'st of things  
Which have eternal weight. Thy song is fraught  
With proofs of that which saint and seer have sought  
In vain to demonstrate; what spirit brings  
Thee surely? Others hope; thou says't, "I know—  
The spirit is immortal." Hast thou seen  
From Patmos Isle the vision? art serene  
Because thy faith—or sight—hath made thee so?  
We question not; but for thy confidence  
In that which was our mothers' ground of trust  
We thank thee—thou, so nobly learn'd, so just  
In judgment, thought, and feeling; so intense  
In all that makes a man.—We give thee praise  
And thanks, thou trusting soul, midst doubting days.

*From Outlook, 52:97; published with the permission  
of the editor.*

## TO ROBERT BROWNING

*Poet, Seer, Philosopher*

BY ERIC MACKEY

I knew thee first as one may know the fame,  
Of some apostle, as a man may know  
The mid-day sun, far-shining o'er the snow.  
I hail'd thee prince of poets! I became  
Vassal of thine, and warm'd me at the flame  
Of thy pure thought, my spirit all aglow  
With dreams of peace, and pomp, and lyric show,  
And all the splendors, Browning! of thy name.  
But now, a man reveal'd, a guide for men,  
I see thy face. I clasp thee by the hand;  
And though the Muses in thy presence stand,  
There's room for my to loiter in thy ken.  
O lordly soul! O wizard of the pen!  
What news from God? What word from Fairy-  
land?

*From Browning Society Papers, Feb. 22, 1889, p. 329-*

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H O M A G E      T O

## BROWNING AT "THE CENCI"

*May 7, 1886*

BY J. J. BRITTON

To Shelley's festival, we keep to-day,  
Comes, honored guest, with genial smile, the man,  
Whom we name *first* of all the poet clan  
Now drawing breath; and so our glances stray  
To where he sits attentive; whilst the grey,  
Cold cloak of misery, that grows alway  
Wraps Beatrice—till, from the ruthless ban  
Comes *peace*, outsmitten by the axe's sway.

Ave! dead singer, caught by hungry seas  
That swept upon thee, swamping half thy song,  
Great as thou wert, a greater yet is here.  
Hail! living singer, mayest thou tarry long  
Among us, love us, weave, with harmonies  
Grave thoughts of power to calm life's fret and fear.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 8, p. 147.*

## MOUNTAIN-BIRTH

(*On The Ring and the Book*)  
*How It Strikes a Contemporary.*

BY ALFRED FORMAN

"The mountain would be better were its snow  
A furlong wider on the sunset side;  
Or farther had its pines crept up to hide  
The scars it gathered in its rising-throe;  
The torrent, as it seems to me below,  
Might well have ventured from its line to swerve  
Into the semblance of a purer curve  
Before the precipice received its flow."  
So the coeval critic; yet its head  
The mountain still shoots up to keep from sun  
Or thunder safe the vale beneath it spread.  
The critic's word was over soon and done.  
The mountain, hardly rooted in its bed,  
Its deathless duties had not yet begun.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 8, p. 120.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### WHAT COMES TO PERFECTION PERISHES

BY SARAH A. BENNETT

"What comes to perfection perishes"—  
Yet ah! the bloom on the vine!  
The velvet sheen of its garlanded green,  
And the purple, purple wine!

"What comes to perfection perishes"—  
The wild rose wreathed in a pall,  
Just kissed by the sun, then her race is run:  
Let the waxy petals fall!

"What comes to perfection perishes"—  
From its stem you sever the spray,  
But those heather bells from the mountain fells  
Shall ring their chime alway.

"What comes to perfection perishes"—  
Slips from the hold of our hand,  
But *lives* in its place (as a beautiful face)  
In the perfectly beautiful Land.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 10, p. 228.*

### TO A BROWNING POEM

BY JAMES L. HUGHES

I read you many times before,  
And thought you clear and true;  
Today I read your lines once more  
And found a message new.

Why did you not reveal to me  
That message long ago?  
"Because you had not power to see;  
You had to wait and grow.

"Live out the message of today,  
And when you read again,  
Your vision will have stronger ray  
For higher message then."

*From "Songs of Gladness;" published with permission of  
the author.*

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H O M A G E      T O

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DEDICATION OF POEMS  
TO MY FRIEND ROBERT BROWNING

BY MRS. CLARA JESSOP MOORE

Thou wilt not turn away—thou wilt not say,  
“I care not for such sad, wild strains as these,  
I care not for pale field-flowers like to thine,  
Nor yet for fractured stones though set in gold.”  
Thou wilt bend over them, and from thy eyes  
Some pitying drops will fall to give them worth.  
A beggar might choose pebbles by the road,  
As well, to take unto a king, whose crown  
Is set with gems:—a peasant better could  
Choose wayside flowers, and bear them to a queen  
Whose palace gardens glow in gorgeous blaze  
Of tropic hues. The king, the queen, might turn  
In cold disdain; but thou, the king of men,  
Wilt say, “No flower but that to me is sweet,  
Which love or friendship places at my feet.”

*From Poems, “The Modern Pilgrim’s Progress” and  
“Slander and Gossip.”*

A GREETING TO BROWNING LOVERS

BY RUTH BALDWIN CHENERY

Lovers of Robert Browning, could we praise  
Our Poet-Master in a dreamy verse,  
That born and steeped in music, might rehearse  
His mighty genius, building phrase on phrase,

He scarce would thank us; for the victor bays  
Are green about his brow, and no reverse  
Can ever dim them: fame howe’er perverse,  
No more can vex him with her long delays.

O, let us feel like him the joy of life;  
The thrastle’s singing and the hawthorne flower  
Cheered his whole soul, and nothing mean or sad

Made him despair that man shall rise through strife;  
“God’s in His heaven!” we will not flinch or cower,  
So shall we make the Heart of Browning glad.

*From “At Vesper Time,” p. 48, with permission of the  
author.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### BROWNING

BY MILES M. DAWSON

This was the prince of suitors. He divined  
The subtle cravings of a woman's mind—  
Her sense of worth, of pride and dignity.  
These plumbed he tenderly, unerringly,  
Whether poor Pippa or the jilted queen  
Or fleeing duchess ventures on the scene.

This was the master-wooer; for he knew  
That he who loves sublimely need not sue,  
That the mute adoration of the soul  
Which is her very being, doth control  
Her every impulse for him and her flesh,  
As the rapt spirit's counterpart, enmesh.

This was the royal lover. This was he  
Who knew, and was, what all lovers should be.  
To him the love of woman was a thing  
So sacred that no other offering—  
Not life, not honor, not whate'er men prize—  
Is pure or precious with it in his eyes.

*Published with author's permission.*

### BROWNING

BY JEANIE PEET

Near a great forest, one cried out "Obscure!"  
As if it angered him; the other, "True;  
Yet none the less those shadowed deeps allure.  
Keep to the sanded alleys, friend! For you  
Such paths were laid. 'Tis one good reason more  
Why I prefer the forest to explore.

"Just where the thick-starred tapestry of vines  
Seems to say 'No admittance', look, they part!  
Far sweep the fragrant vistas through the pines.  
Obscure! Like nature, like the human heart."

*From the Century Magazine, Vol. 72, No. 2, p. 253;  
published with permission of editor.*

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H O M A G E      T O

## TO BROWNING

BY PAKENHAM BEATTY

None love in vain; for God, who will not take  
His least gift back, takes not the heavenliest one;  
None of his faithful will Love's heart forsake,  
Though death make dumb the spring and dark the sun.

The dead are always with us everywhere,  
Unseen of mortal eyes, yet unremoved,  
Those gracious ghosts that make the twilight fair,  
The souls that lighted ours, and hearts that loved.

No nightingale sings for the rose alone,  
But the least leaf may share his gift of song;  
So, while the many mourners make their moan,  
I, least of all who loved thee, shall not wrong

Thy fame, when these have left thee with thy peers  
Nor of thy spirit be misunderstood  
That bring thee my Love's gift of song and tears—  
I give my best, and each heart's best is good.

*From Living Age, 198-770; published with permission  
of editor.*

## BROWNING

By C. E. D. PHELPS

A THOUGHT-BOW which the world-string scarce can pull;  
A hand too heavy for the instrument;  
A gold that needs alloy ere it be sent  
To mint or graver; verse of faults as full  
As is the gem of facets; myriad lights  
There sparkle, none converge; gigantic wings,  
With feet unfit for homely travellings:  
They can but perch on Himalaya-heights.  
Ears may be dull or low, he never seeks  
To reach them stooping, as another man.  
They rise who hear him; he hath proved he can  
Be understood of Babel-host:  
And who shall blame the poet if he speaks  
His own peculiar language more than most?

*From Poet Lore, Vol. 5, p. 288; published with permission  
of the editor.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## BROWNING

BY CARA E. WHITON-STONE

Oh, English Mother of that flame-crowned race,  
High priests of Song, who nurtured on thy breast  
Live on immortal,—Browning with the rest,  
Proud of thine ownership lift up thy face  
His birthday on Time's shining page to trace,  
Whose song, like thunder of the heavens, has passed  
Magnificently onward East and West.  
Till in Fame's citadel it has found place.  
Fitting his advent to the world of men  
The nightingales should chorus near and far  
Who into Epics sang them back again,  
Enrapturing Springs that ages cannot mar,  
And set thy heavens to music with a pen  
Dipt in the flooding splendour of a star.

*From the Boston Browning Society, 1909-1910, p. 24;  
published with permission of the Society.*

TO ROBERT BROWNING  
ON RE-READING SOME POEMS LONG  
UNREAD

By E. DICKINSON WEST

Friend, "strong since joyful"—guide upon the heights  
Of life's best blessedness and life's best pain—  
Awhile I left thee. Now I come again,  
Urged by the vigor lent of old, which fights  
Within my soul, and there makes good its rights  
Over the sloths and langours of the plain.  
Lead me! I, if I follow thee, am sane  
From sad-sick dreams and lotus-flower delights  
That o'er the indolence of heart's despair  
Shed charm of Art. Thy nobler Art doth cope  
With doubts and ills. And they who with thee dare  
Thought's strenuous climb on rugged mountain slope,  
Find vision purged, like thine, by that keen air,  
To catch dear glimpses of a far-off hope.

*Aug. 30, 1881. From Academy, Dec. 17, 1881, p. 454.*

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H O M A G E      T O

TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY EDMUND GOSSE

As young Greek athletes hung their votive strigils  
Within the temples of the Powers above;  
As lovers gave the lamp that lit their vigils  
Through sleepless hours of love;

So I this lyric symbol of my labour,  
This antique light that led my dreams so long,  
This battered hull of a barbaric tabor,  
Beaten to runic song,

Bear to that shrine where your dear presence lingers,  
Where stands your Muse's statue white as snow;  
I take my poor gift in my trembling fingers,  
And hang it there and go.

This very day one hundred years are over  
Since Landor's godlike spirit came to earth;  
Surely the winter air laughed like a lover,  
The hour that give him birth.

Ah! had he lived to hear our hearts' emotion,  
What lyric love had strewn his path today!  
Yourself had sung; and Swinburne's rapt devotion  
Had cleft its sunward way;

And I too, though unknown and unregarded,  
Had thrown my violets where you threw your bays,  
Had seen my garland, also, not discarded,  
Had gloried all my days!

But since the world his august spirit haunted  
Detains him here no more, but mourns him dead,  
And other chaplets, in strange airs enchanted,  
Girdle his sacred head,

Take thou my small oblation, yea! receive it!  
Laid at thy feet, within thy shrine it stands!  
I brought it from my heart, and here I leave it.  
The work of reverent hands.

*January 30, 1875.*

*Page Sixty*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## ESSAY ON ROBERT BROWNING, DEC. 1886

BY W. G. KINGSLAND

O strong-soul'd singer of higher themes and wide—  
Thrice noble in thy work and life alike—  
Thy genius glides upon a sea, whose tide  
Heaves with a pain and passion infinite!

Men's hearts laid bare beneath thy pitying touch;  
Strong words that comfort all o'erweareied much;  
Thoughts whose calm cadence moulds our spirit-life,  
Gives strength to bravely bear amid world-strife;  
And one large hope, full orb'd as summer sun,  
That souls shall surely meet when LIFE is won!

So round thy heart our grateful thanks entwine;  
Men are the better for these songs of thine!  
At eve thy muse doth o'er us mellower swell,  
Strong with the strength of life lived long and well.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part II, p. 399.*

## ROBERT BROWNING

BY BERTHA LAFFAN

He stands like some tall monarch of the hills  
About whose feet the hamlets clustering spread  
In valleys daily ringing with the tread  
Of labour, and the unresting whirr of mills—  
Above, the air is vocal with the trills  
Of woodland birds, and tree tops overhead  
Weave the green curtains of Titania's bed  
Lapped in the murmur of a thousand rills—  
Then upward, sheer, a sudden rock-face grows  
Rugged and rent, and cleft with lightning scars,  
Or furrowed with the glacier's travail throes.  
But far beyond the roughness and the jars  
Of warring forces, rise the virgin snows  
Up to the silence of the eternal stars!

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 96.*

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HOMAGE TO

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## ROBERT BROWNING

BY HARRIET ADAMS SAWYER

That soul of thine, thou peerless bard immortal,  
Is like unto the bounteous, soundless sea—  
Upon its shores a few bright shells we gather,  
In ocean-bed some pearls are found to be;  
But, who could tell the gems thy depths have treasured?  
Who, understand the sources whence they spring?  
We only know those depths could not be measured,—  
Our best powers falter, when of thee we sing.  
O, mortal, with a god-like insight dealing  
With men, and women walking earthly ways,  
How learned you pathways into all hearts stealing?  
What tuned your song for hymning human lays?  
And, too, we dimly see thy likeness peering  
Through night's celestial canopy above,  
We know and name some of its constellations  
Our souls read mystic messages of Love.  
But, when strained ears have listened to their story,  
Our inner light reveals far more than they,—  
We know well that we know not half the glory  
The heavens declare. We hearken—we obey:  
So, will we seek thy message to remember;—  
To see divinity through weakness shine,  
To know that man at length in joy must waken  
In image of his Maker—all divine.

*From the Boston Browning Society, 1909-1910, p. 22;  
published with permission of the society.*

## THE TWO FELICITIES

(Appended to the *Pompilia Monologue of  
'The Ring and the Book'*)

BY WILLIAM WATSON

"Tis human fortune's happiest heights to be  
A spirit melodious, lucid, poised, and whole;  
Second in order of felicity  
I hold it, to have walked with such a soul.

BY CHARLES B. WRIGHT

A goodly truth, and goodliest here to write,  
In the pure ether of each happy height;  
The first felicity Pompilia's dower,  
And ours the other by a poet's power.

*From Poet Lore, Vol. 9, p. 472; with permission.  
Page Sixty-two*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### BROWNING'S LINEAGE

BY HENRY VAN DYKE

How blind the toil that burrows like the mole,  
In winding graveyard pathways underground,  
For Browning's lineage! What if men have found  
Poor footmen or rich merchants on the roll  
Of his forbears? Did they beget his soul?  
Nay, for he came of ancestry renowned  
In poesy through all the world, and crowned  
With fadeless light that shines from pole to pole.

The blazons on his poet's shield are these:  
The flaming sign of Shelley's heart on fire,  
The golden globe of Shakespeare's human stage,  
The staff and scrip of Chaucer's pilgrimage,  
The rose of Dante's deep, divine desire,  
The tragic mask of wise Euripides.

*From the Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 99, No. 2, p. 260;  
published with the permission of the author.*

### BROWNING SAID OF THE "THE RING AND THE BOOK:"

*"It lives, if precious be the soul of man to man."*

BY RUTH BALDWIN CHENERY

O thou Great Soul, with what a joyous beat  
The heart still throbs at thine exultant cry,  
For thou art not of those that would deny  
To Genius, even thine own, largest meet;  
It was not thine to taste the lulling sweet  
Of early praise; for long did men decry  
The greatness of thy powers, but for reply,  
At last, Fame cast her laurels at thy feet.  
"If precious be the soul of man to man,  
It lives"; what though the centuries forget  
It's crowding details as the English plod  
Forever forward in Heaven's unknown plan:  
"It lives"; its truth shall be immortal yet,  
If precious be the soul of man to God.

*From "At Vesper Time," p. 53; with permission of the  
author.*

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H O M A G E   T O

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IN A COPY OF BROWNING

BY BLISS CARMAN

Browning, old fellow, your leaves grow yellow,  
Beginning to mellow as seasons pass.  
Your cover is wrinkled and stained and sprinkled,  
And warped and crinkled from sleep on the grass.

Is it a wine stain or only a pine stain,  
That makes such a fine stain on your dull blue—  
Got as we numbered the clouds that lumbered  
Southward and slumbered when day was through?

What is the dear mark there like an ear mark?  
Only a tear mark a woman let fall,  
As, bending over, she bade me discover,  
“Who *plays* the lover, he loses all!”

With you for teacher we learned love’s feature  
In every creature that roves or grieves;  
When the winds were brawling, or bird-folk calling  
Or leaf-folk falling about our eaves.

No law must straiten the ways they wait in,  
Whose spirits greateren and hearts aspire.  
The world may dwindle, and summer brindle,  
So love but kindle the soul to fire.

Here many a red line, or penciled headline,  
Shows love could wed line to perfect sense;  
And something better than wisdom’s fetter  
Has made your letter dense to the dense.

You made us farers and equal sharers  
With homespun-wearers in home-made joys;  
You made us princes no plea convinces  
That spirit winces at dust and noise.

When Fate was nagging, and days were dragging,  
And fancy lagging, you gave it scope,  
When eaves were drippy, and pavements slippy,  
From Lippo Lippi to Evelyn Hope.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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When winter's arrow pierced to the marrow,  
And thought was narrow, you gave it room;  
We guessed the warder on Roland's border,  
And helped to order the Bishop's Tomb.

When winds were harshish, and ways were marshish,  
We found with Karshish escape at need;  
Were bold with Waring in far seafaring,  
And strong in sharing Ben Ezra's creed.

We felt dark menace of lovers pen us,  
Afloat in Venice, devising fibs;  
And little mattered the rain that pattered,  
While Blougram chattered to Gigadibs.

And we too waited with heart elated  
And breathing bated, for Pippa's song;—  
Saw Satan hover with wings to cover  
Porphyria's lover, Pompilia's wrong.

Long thoughts were started, when youth departed  
From the half-hearted Riccardi's bride;  
For, saith your fable, great Love is able  
To slip the cable and take the tide.

Or truth compels us with Paracelsus,  
Till nothing else is of worth at all,  
Del Sarto's vision is our own mission,  
And art's ambition is God's own call.

Through all the seasons, you gave us reasons  
For splendid treasons to doubt and fear;  
Bade no foot falter, though weaklings palter,  
And friendships alter, from year to year.

Since first I sought you, found you and brought you,  
Hugged you and brought you home from Cornhill,  
While some upbraid you, and some parade you,  
Nine years have made you my master still.

*Published by kind permission of the author and publishers:*

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H O M A G E      T O

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THE WOMEN OF BROWNING

BY SIVORI LEVEY

The Ghosts of Browning's Women pass before my dream-ing sight,—  
Pauline, the Soul's Confessor; and with songs of heart's delight

Young Pippa passes;

Now Ottima and Phene take their shape within my mind,  
And the friend of Paracelsus, faithful Michal;—just behind

Some laughing lasses;

And Evelyn Hope, the golden-haired; Count Gismond's bride from France;  
Porphyria fair (her neck entwined) with ever-trustful glance,

And My Last Duchess;

Domizia, and Eulalia, with all their doubts dispelled;  
And James Lee's lonely, melancholy wife whose heart is held

In Sorrow's clutches;

Artemis, classic goddess; and the sweet Balaustion now Approaches with the wreath of Athens' favours on her brow;

Then Klutemnaistra;

Anael; Mildred Tresham; Violante—still distressed—  
And the Spirit of Pompilia comes her baby at her breast,  
No foes to pester her;

Madame Riel, the Belle Aurore; the Gipsy-Soul, Fifine;  
Then one in gorgeous Eastern robes, 'tis Balkis, Sheba's Queen,

So wise and placid;

Colombe; then Kate from Cyprus; the Riccardi's bride comes too;

Dove-like, the dainty Duchess, and the Yellow Duchess,  
who

Looks grim and acid!

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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The Faultless Painter's wayward wife; Court Ladies,  
one, two, three,  
Good Wives and Bad Wives, high and low, from France  
and Italy,—  
With husband, lover,—  
The Queen and Constance, Beatrice, and Christina,—  
still they come  
With others, see, from Florence, and from Venice, and  
from Rome . . . .  
My dream is over.

*From the Journal of the Robert Browning Guild—Vol.  
I, No. 1, (1914), p. 20; published with permission  
of the author.*

### SONNET ON BROWNING'S MASTERPIECE “THE RING AND THE BOOK”

BY RUTH BALDWIN CHENERY

O Ring, no slender, narrow circlet, thou!  
Enwrought thou liest firm and massive there,  
Welded of virgin gold; some craftsman rare  
Enrich thee thus, mayhap for marriage vow.

Old Yellow Book, the centuries allow  
A thousand readers, and but one aware  
Thou hadst a soul; when in that Florence square  
\*The wind of inspiration swept his brow:

Behold, O ye the Poet's voice awakes,  
Another Ring, from gold was never mined,  
To guard his singer's “golden verse” he said;

Another Book, which tells that morning breaks,  
With Phosphor-star of Truth, for humankind;  
This Ring and Book, forever shall be wed.

\*“*A spirit laughs and leaps through every limb,  
And lights my eye, and lifts me by the hair.*”

*From “At Vesper Time,” p. 52; with permission of the  
author.*

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HOMAGE TO

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AN ODE FOR THE CENTENARY OF THE  
BIRTH OF ROBERT BROWNING

BY GEORGE STERLING

As unto lighter strains a boy might turn  
From where great altars burn  
And Music's grave archangels tread the night,  
So I, in seasons past,  
Loved not the bitter might  
And merciless control  
Of thy bleak trumpets calling to the soul.  
Their consummating blast  
Held inspirations of affright,  
As when a faun  
Hears mournful thunders roll  
On breathless, wide transparencies of dawn.  
Nor would I hear  
With thee, superb and clear  
The indomitable laughter of the race;  
Nor would I face  
Clean truth, with her cold agates of the well,  
Nor with thee trace  
Her footprints passing upward to the snows,  
But sought a phantom rose  
And islands where the ghostly siren sings;  
Nor would I dwell  
Where star-forsaking wings  
On mortal thresholds hide their mystery,  
Nor watch with thee  
The light of heaven cast on common things.

But now in dreams of day I see thee stand  
A grey, great sentry on the encompassed wall  
That fronts the Night forever, in thy hand  
A consecrated spear  
To test the dragons of man's ancient fear  
From secret gulfs that crawl—  
A captain of that choral band  
Whose reverend faces, anxious of the Dark,  
Yet undismayed  
By rain of ruined worlds against the night,  
Turned evermore to hark  
The music of God's silence, and were stayed  
By something other than the reason's light.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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And I have seen thee as  
An eagle, strong to pass  
Where tempest-shapen clouds go to and fro  
And winds and noons have birth,  
But whose regard is on the lands below  
And wingless things of earth.  
And yet not thine for long  
The feignèd passion of the nightingale,  
Nor shards of haliotis, nor the song  
Of cymballed fountains hidden in the dale,  
Nor gardens where the feet of Fragrance steal:  
'Twas thine the laying-on to feel  
Of tragic hands imperious and cold,  
That, grasping, led thee from the dreams of old,  
Making thee voyager  
Of seas within the cosmic solitude,  
Whose moons the long-familiar stars occlude—  
Whose living sunsets stir  
With visions of the timelessness we crave.  
And thou didst ride a wave  
That gathered solemn music to its breast,  
And, breaking, shook our strand with thought's unrest,  
Till men far inland heard its mighty call  
Where the young mornings vault the world's blue wall.  
Nature hath lonely voices at her heart  
And some thou heardest, for at thine own  
Were chords beyond all Art  
That stir but to the eternal undertone.  
But not necessitous to thee  
The dreams that were when Arcady began  
Or Paphos soared in iris from the sea;  
For thou couldst guess  
The rainbows hidden in the frustrate slime,  
And saw'st in crownless Man  
A Titan scourged through Time  
With pains and raptures of his loneliness.  
And thou wast wanderer  
In that dim House that is the human heart,  
Where thou didst roam apart,  
Seeing what pillars were  
Between its deep foundations and the sun,  
What halls of dream undone,  
What seraphs hold compassionate their wings  
Before the youth and bitterness of things  
Ere all see clear  
The gain in loss, the triumph in the tear.

---

## HOMAGE TO

---

Time's whitest loves lie radiant in thy song,  
Like starlight on an ocean, for thine own  
Was as a deathless lily grown  
In Paradise—ethereal and strong.  
And to thine eyes  
Earth had no earth that held not haughty dust,  
And seeds of future harvestings in trust,  
And hidden azures of eventual skies.  
Yet hadst thou sharper strains,  
Even as the Power determines us with pains,  
And, seeing harvests, saw'st as well the chaff,  
And, seeing Beauty, saw'st her shames no less,  
Loosing the sweet,  
High thunder of thy Jovian laugh  
On souls purblind in their self-righteousness.  
O vision wide and keen!  
Which knew, untaught, that pains to joyance are  
As night unto the star  
That on the effacing dawn must burn unseen.  
And thou didst know what meat  
Was torn to give us milk,  
What countless worms made possible the silk  
That robes the mind, what plan  
Drew as a bubble from old infamies  
And fen-pools of the past  
The shy and many-colored soul of man.  
Yea! thou hast seen the lees  
In that rich cup we lift against the day,  
Seen the man-child at his disastrous play—  
His shafts without a mark,  
His fountains flowing downward to the dark,  
His maiming and his bars,  
Then turned to see  
His vatic shadow cast athwart the stars,  
And his strange challenge to infinity.

But who am I to speak,  
Far down the mountain, of its altar-peak,  
Or cross on feeble wings,  
Adventurous, the oceans in thy mind?  
We of a wider day's bewilderings  
For very light seem blind,  
And fearful of the gods our hands have formed.  
Some lift their eyes and seem  
To see at last the lofty human scheme  
Fading and toppling as a sunset stormed

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

By wind and evening, with the stars in doubt,  
And some cry, *On to Brotherhood!* And some,  
(Their Dream's high music dumb)  
*Nay! let us hide in roses all our chains,*  
*Tho' all the lamps go out!*  
*Let us accept our lords!*  
*Time's tensions move not save to subtler pains!*  
And over all the Silence is as swords . . .  
Wherefore be near us in our day of choice,  
Lest Hell's red choirs rejoice;  
And may our counsels be  
More wise, more kindly, for the thought of thee;  
And may our deeds attest  
Thy covenant of fame  
To men of after-years that see thy name  
Held like a flower by Honor to her breast.  
Thy station in our hearts long since was won—  
Safe from the jealous years—  
Thou of whose love, thou of whose thews and tears  
We rest most certain when the day is done  
And formless shadows close upon the sun!  
Thou wast a star ere death's long night shut down,  
And for thy brows the crown  
Was graven ere the birth-pangs, and thy bed  
Is now of hallowed marble, and a fane  
Among the mightier dead:  
More blameless than thine own what soul hath stood?  
Dost thou lie deaf until another Reign,  
Or hear as music o'er thy head  
The ceaseless trumpets of the war for Good?  
Ah, thou! ah, thou!  
Stills God thy question now?

*Published with permission of the author.*

A FAREWELL

*A Translation*

BY HENRY TRANTHAM

Not a fretful tear shall fall for thee in parting,  
Now that thou hast made thy race;  
For such a song of triumph hast thou left us  
As one who goes to greet a loving master face to face.

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H O M A G E      T O

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TO BROWNING THE MUSIC-MASTER

BY ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

O I once was a lad  
Of a single thought,  
Melody-mad,  
With ears for naught  
But the miracles Bach and Beethoven wrought,  
When suddenly you—  
Out of the blue—  
With the crabbèd old master Galuppi, dropped,  
And grim-eyed Hugues  
Of the mountainous fugues,  
And the rampired walls of the marvelous Abt,—  
To fashion me straight from Tone's far strand  
A way to a humaner, dearer shore,—  
A bridge to poetry-land.

Then to my soul I swore:  
'If poets may win such store  
Of music's own highland air,  
Yet abide in the common round,  
Transmuting man's dusty ground  
To gems for the world to wear,—  
Theirs, too, is a precious art,  
Is a thing that I fain would share,—  
A thing that is near to my heart!

Thus were a young soul's ears unstopped  
By Galuppi and Hugues and the marvelous Abt,  
Who bridged a way for ignorant feet,  
And parted wide for wondering eyes  
The port of a second paradise;  
Showing how right it is, and meet  
That a Shubert's voice may never repeat  
What a Shakespeare's lips once solemnize;—  
That music waxes where poesy wanes,  
And, with thirsty lips to poesy's veins,  
Grows by her want, by her wasting, gains.

For the protean art is this, and this!  
The rainbow shimmer of love's young bliss,  
A gesture despairing, a dream-like whim,  
The down on the plumes of the cherubim,

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

The body of Ariel, lissome and fresh,  
Too subtle for poesy's golden mesh,  
An exquisite, evanescent shape  
That 'breaks through language' to escape  
To the bourne of that country, brighter, vaster,  
Where now you are singing, dear Music-Master.

*Published with the permission of the author.*

“NOTHING BUT A POET”\*

BY W. C. GANNETT

“Nothing but a poet,”—so he said, and wondered  
At the sole persistence of his years.  
Laughing world, you’ll know it, now that, silence-sun-  
dered,  
He is in the welcome of his peers.

What said Milton to him, what said Keats and Shakspere?  
Oh, to see the smile on Dante’s face!  
Catch the great Greek “Chaire”, hear the “bronze throat”  
    hail him,  
“Browning’s come among us,—give him place!”

“Nothing but a poet,”—singing songs of soul-growth,  
Splendor in the pain-throb, rise in fall,  
“Saul the failure” in us re-creating kingly,—  
Songs one surge of morning;—that was all!

Camberwell  
May 7, 1812

Venice  
December 12, 1889

\*Written for the Browning Memorial Meeting in Recital  
Hall, Auditorium Building, Chicago, Feb. 27, 1890.

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H O M A G E      T O

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THE SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE  
BY NEETA MARQUIS

Coined from the treasure of a woman's heart,  
For him whose love had crowned her with delight,  
Uplifting her by force of its pure might  
From solitary ways, where Joy, apart  
From her pale sister Sorrow, was not known;—  
Rare aureate words graved with the High Queen's face,  
Still current in true-love's exchanging place,  
And with much using but the brighter grown!

O poetry of life! O blessed quill  
That fixed such golden thoughts! Their messages,  
Imbued with passion delicate and strong,  
Are love's most lovely fashioning in song,  
Conveying through the spirit's finer thrill  
The pressure of her human lips on his.

“CHILDE ROLAND”

BY HUMPHREYS PARK

You set the slug-horn to your lips and blew,  
And after—what came after? Did it fade,  
The round squat turret, and some deeper shade  
Of evening drench to blackness the curst view?  
Or did some sinister strange thing, some rue  
Of shape unspeakable, come forth, that made  
You fetch quick breath, and grasp the loose-slung blade,  
And pray at last your soul prove not untrue?

That there was fight there, taunting face to face,  
Hell's hatred matched against one proud soul's scorn,  
We guess, but not how went the fight's disgrace  
Yet, to our fancy is the wonder borne  
That you came forth unscathed, and left the place  
A-ring with the shrill mocking of your horn.

*From Appleton's.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## BROWNING

BY THEO STONE

Oh England, mother of that flame-crowned race,  
High priests of song, who nurtured on thy breast  
Live on Immortal,—Browning with the rest,  
Proud of thine ownership lift up thy face  
His birthday on Time's shining page to trace,  
Whose song, like thunder of the heavens, has pressed  
Magnificently onward East and West  
Till in Fame's citadel it has found place.  
Fitting his advent to the world of men  
The nightingales should chorus near and far  
Who into Epics sang them back again,  
Enrapturing springs that ages cannot mar;  
And set thy heavens to music, with a pen  
Dipt in the flooding splendor of a star.

## TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY MABEL BARNETT GATES

Thou poet lover of humanity,  
Cause us to see through thy illumined sight  
The heart of e'en the lowest of our kind  
And with a pitying smile, like God, forgiveness find.

Inspire us with the glory of a soul  
Of one of God's highest. May we respond  
With aspiration high and noble longing  
To thoughts exalted that to our hearts come thronging.

May we, through thy heart's truest alchemy,  
Transmute each base thing into gold so bright  
That evil fades in the effulgent glow  
And naught but good endures through centuries slow.

May thy clear vision reveal to our dull sense  
Ultimate Truth and Beauty that are our goal.

---

## HOMAGE TO

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### THE GIRL WITH THE BLUE EYES

*To Miss Sarah LeMoyne Cowell, to Whom Browning  
Gave This Name.*

BY ANNA CATHERINE MARKHAM

Venice and Browning, youth and you—  
You with his sister's and his mother's name,  
And he took note of that vivid blue  
Alive in your eyes, that noon-sky flame,  
Like the turquoise blaze—the azure royal,  
Quick in the drift-wood fire aglow;  
And put report of that sapphire shining,  
Nemophila, gentian, lupin, ablow,  
Off (who knows) with spoils of far and near—  
Your eyes, and Evelyn's red young mouth,  
Yes, and Fifine's rose-petal ear,  
And the spirit-brow of her in the South—  
All heaped in some magical, secret place,  
Trick and turn, and light and shade,—  
Memories hoarded and brooded to build  
Those myriad-mooded, wild-word women he made.

### BROWNING AND SHELLEY

BY E. D. W.\*

Strong poet soul, thou yearnest to thy friend  
That other poet soul elect by thee  
For worship in that deep affinity  
Wherein two human natures seek to blend,  
And set their opposite forces to one end.  
It had been surely good for earth if he,  
While dwelling in that flesh thou ne'er didst see,  
Had in his need had help thy strength could lend,  
(Help better far than that wild deaf "west wind"  
Whereto in loneliness went out his cry  
That meant a seeking for his God unknown—)  
Good will it be for heaven when thou shalt find  
Thy Shelley there,—and two souls, drawing nigh,  
Perfect together things each wrought alone.

*August, 1872.*

\*E. D. W. (*Elizabeth Dickinson West*) is now  
Mrs. Edward Dowden of Dublin.

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### ROBERT BROWNING

BY FRANCES WHITMARSH WILE

You bid me pledge a poet in the fruitage of the vine:  
I give you one whose music is the vigor of your wine,  
The charging blast of bugles when the standards are  
unfurled,  
The air from hill-tops bearing a new life along the world;  
Whose lyric lilt of passion are the breath of roses blown,  
Whose gospel recreates the heart wherein its light hath  
shone.

His men and women, summoned from the mists of long  
ago,  
Lay bare before our vision heights and deeps of joy and  
woe:  
Abt Vogler builds his palace, and young Pippa, passing,  
sings,  
Euripides is chanting, and the harp of David rings:  
Where lost ones lie in Paris on Setebos' magic isle,  
He sees, through death and darkness, Love's illuminating  
smile.

One thread binds all the dramas and the stories that are  
told,  
One thread is always throbbing through the music mani-  
fold:  
The Soul of Man aspiring, and the striving to attain,  
The failure proving triumph, and the growth that comes  
by pain;  
Supreme and crucial moments that are earth's divining  
wand,  
The finite's deathless yearning toward the Infinite beyond.

No sigh of resignation and no wailing of despair,  
But splendid affirmation of the worth of life is there.  
He breasts the fate that baffles while he pours in eager  
strains  
His faith the Love shall conquer, that the Lord forever  
reigns.  
To the man of full assurance, of a jubilance divine,  
To the Master, Robert Browning, do I pledge this cup  
of mine.

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## HOMAGE TO

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### ROBERT BROWNING

BY AUBREY DE VERE

Mourn, Italy, with England mourn, for both  
He sang with song's discriminating love,  
Thy towers that flash the wooded crag above;  
Thy trellised vineyard's purple overgrowth;  
Thy matin balm; thy noontide's pleasing sloth;  
Thy convent bell, dim lake, and homeward dove;  
Thine evening star, that through the bowered alcove  
Silvers the white flight of the circling moth.  
He sang thy best and worst—false love, fierce war,  
Renaissance craft, child graces, saintly art.  
Old pomps from "Casa Guidi Windows" seen.  
There dwelt he happy; there that minstrel queen,  
Who shared his poet crown but gladdened more  
To hold, unshared, her poet's manly heart.

*From the Dedication of*

### THE WANDERER

BY OWEN MEREDITH

#### 24.

"And, citing all he said or sung  
With praise reserved for bards like him,  
Spake of that friend who dwells among  
The Apennine, and there hath strung  
A harp of Anakim;

#### 25.

"Than whom a mightier master never  
Touch'd the deep chords of hidden things;  
Nor error did from truth dissever  
With keener glance; nor made endeavour  
To rise on bolder wings

#### 26.

"In those high regions of the soul  
Where Thought itself grows dim with awe."

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 2, p. 146.*

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## HOMAGE TO

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### THE TIME AND THE PLACE

BY BLISS CARMAN

"Never the time and the place  
And the loved one all together!"  
Ah, Browning, that does to tell!  
But I have an eagle feather  
Hid in my waistcoat too.

Yes, once in the wild June weather,  
In God's own North befell  
The joy not time shall undo  
Nor the storm of years efface.

Ah, Master Browning, you hear?  
If over the time and the place  
With aught of thy mood concur,  
Far off in my golden year,  
The solstice of my prime,  
Youth done, age not begun,  
The moment that soul is ripe  
For the little touch of rhyme,  
Then hearken! If there but stir  
One breath of the Spirit of earth  
Through me his frail reed pipe,  
(As the hermit-thrush  
Rehearses the scene when the joy of the world  
had birth,  
So sure, so fine,  
Disturbing the hush,)  
You shall hearken, and hear  
Take rapture and sense and form in one perfect  
line  
A golden lyric of Her!

*From The Month, January, 1897.*

### IN A COPY OF "AGAMEMNON LA SAISIAZ AND DRAMATIC IDYLS"

BY B. P. SHILLABER (MRS. PARTINGTON)

A merry Christmas I send with this,  
Though it seems absurdity crowning  
To wish for cachinatory bliss  
Over the works of Browning.

*From The Brownings and America, p. 44.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

BROWNING SOCIETY

BY GEORGE JAY SMITH

Says the wise old maxim, a man is known  
By his company; then of a poet  
As truly we say that his creatures alone,  
That are born of his soul, can show it.

Touched by this stone, how much pure gold  
Spring forth from the dross, and shimmers?  
In poems today as in those of old,  
All is not gold that glimmers!

Can a man *create*, can he bring to birth  
Live humans, hearts a-beating,  
As Shakspere gave to this gray dull earth  
Orlando and Rosalind meeting?—

Or as Meredith summoned for our delight  
Young Richard and Lucy—Diana—  
The knowing of whom feeds the soul with the white  
And sweet of a heaven-sent manna?

Many sing of nature, and some  
Of art: but few are the singers  
Who picture us human life. . . . such come  
To the world as the manna-bringers.

How secure in the rank of these he stays  
Whom the dear British public would none of—  
That “Robert Browning, maker of plays”—  
What a high small group he’s one of!

For tried by the test of humanness,  
And of art that’s divinely creative,  
How clear he emerges above the press  
Of singers less strong, less native!

There was scanned by his mind the roll of the race  
In the shining vista of history,  
And all that he touched re-lives in its place,  
Revealed, and pluckt of its mystery.

He ranged through Greece, Arabia, Rome,  
Read the rich romance of the ages  
That rise to the Renaissance, and the tome  
Of his own Day’s crowded pages.

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

And all that life of his fellowmen,  
As light many-hued through a prism,  
Passed through his soul and glowed again,  
Renewed in the poet's chrism.

He let speak Adam and Lilith and Eve,  
Voiced Solomon's, Sheba's, yearning,  
Made the song of David's harp relieve  
The lone king Saul of his burning:

He entered the heart of Euripides,  
Englished the Aeschylan drama,  
Apologized Aristophanes,—  
Unrolled the Greek panorama:

Gave us Ferishtah, the Persian wise,  
Rabbi Ben Ezra, and Cleon,  
Let old Paracelsus our blindness advise  
How past earth's mists we may see on:

Told the tale of the Piper, or Hervè Riel,  
Of Lippo, of ill-starred Porphyria,  
Of the Bishop who ordered his tomb so well—  
Fit story for "Jocoseria":

Delved to the depths of Caliban's mire,  
Heard Sludge the medium's droning,  
Let light Galuppi re-tune his lyre,  
Abt Vogler his organ's toning:

Parleyed with Dodington, Christopher Smart,  
And Clive, the empire-builder,  
Made Blougram bare his episcopal heart,  
Sordello our brains bewilder:

But O, how he rose to our keenest demand—  
The test of art highest-human—  
By proving that he could understand,  
Reveal, create for us, woman—

How shine in a galaxy rich of scope,  
Enshrined in our memorabilia,  
Pippa, and Colombe, and Evelyn Hope,  
And the passionate proud Pompilia,

That sad smiling Duchess we know as "My Last",  
And she whom James Lee wedded,  
Sweet Mildred Tresham whom death seized fast,  
And that Countess whom Gismond besteaded.

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HOMAGE TO

---

But enough! What need call the roll of more names!  
They are part of our lives, our being.  
And Robert Browning our heart acclaims  
As the maker, the poet, true-seeing.

The scope of the human was his to reveal,  
Whether base or of noblest station;  
How men and women live, think, feel,  
He tells—that is true creation!

If a man is known by his company, then—  
The maxim admits no dubiety—  
These creatures of Browning's, women and men,  
Form the real Browning Society!

### CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

BY LOUIS UNTERMEYER

God, we don't like to complain,  
We know that the mines are no lark,  
But—there's the pools from the rain,  
But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, you don't know what it is,  
You, in Your well-lighted sky,  
Watching a meteor whizz—  
Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon  
Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,  
Even You'd tire of it soon  
Down in the dark and the damps . . .

Nothing but blackness above,  
And nothing that moves but the cars—  
God, in return for our love,  
Fling us a handful of stars!

*Published with permission of author.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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TO MRS. THOMAS B. STOWELL AND  
MRS. SIDNEY J. PARSONS

*From the Browning Department of Ebell, 1914-1918*

BY BLANCHE COLES

Through four delightful years, with tender care,  
Your labors have wrought out a friendship ring  
Of purest gold, bestudded 'round with rare  
Pearls of thought from the eternal spring  
Our poet found. The circle now is done;  
The gold is left in its intrinsic worth—  
For all the dross of common thought is gone—  
And lo! the forged, flashing truth flames forth:  
Our need to hold eternal things was great,  
And in our strait a loving God has given—  
While maelstroms lure the world to gloom and hate—  
This golden link to bind us fast to heaven.  
So now we proffer parting words 'mid tears,  
And may their spirit gladden coming years.

## SORDELLO

BY SANDA ENOS

Within the sea of Poesy doth lie  
An isle that sheerly doth uplift a brow  
As rough and uninviting, I avow,  
As any mariner has chanced to spy.  
With such forbidding looks it greets the eye  
That many who the waves for pleasure plough,  
For smiling lands beyond, keep straight the prow  
And with indifferent glances pass it by.

'Tis called Sordello. If you boldly thread  
Its thickets, well you will rewarded be;  
For many an emerald glade you will behold,  
And many a crystal stream with sands of gold,  
And you will hear from strange birds overhead  
Full many a burst of deathless melody.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 8, p. 147; in the  
Current, Chicago, February 20, 1886.*

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HOMAGE TO

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"JOCOSERIA"

BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER

Men grow old before their time,  
With the journey half before them:  
In languid rhyme  
They deplore them.

Life up-gathers carks and cares,  
So goodbye to maid and lover!  
Find three gray hairs,  
And cry, "All's over!"

Look at Browning! How he keeps  
In the seventies still a heart  
That never sleeps,—  
Still an art

Full of youth's own grit and power,  
Thoughts we deemed to boys belonging,—  
The Springtime's flower  
Love-and-longing.

*Published with the kind permission of the Century Company and of Houghton Mifflin Company.*

### DJABAL'S SONG

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER

And am I not Hakeem, though man?  
Needs it a God to plot and plan  
And pour his heart and brain and soul  
Through lonely patient scheming years, intent  
By small slow conquests to control  
And bring to birth, at last, the purpose meant?  
Is it no marvel earth-like stuff  
Compacts a sun night's blackness to rebuff?  
A man who leads is miracle enough!

*Taken from—Lips of Music, p. 115; published with the permission of the author.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## AT FANO

*To Robert Browning*

BY RENNELL RODD

Dearly honored, great dead poet, still as living speak  
to me!

This is Fano, world-forgotten little Fano by the sea:

I have come to see that angel which Guercino dreamed  
and drew,

Since whate'er you loved and honored I would hold in  
honor too.

Like some sea-bird's nest the township clusters in its  
rampart wall,—

Such a twilight on the byways, such an autumn over all:

Gloomy streets with silent portals, all the pulse of life  
they hide,

Throbbing toward that one piazza where it centres into  
pride;

House and palace, as their wont is in these Adriatic ports,  
Turn their backs on darkling alleys and their faces on  
the courts,

Courts beyond each tunnelled entrance, where through  
vaulted arches seen

Glimpses flash of dancing sunlight, jets of fountain,  
glint of green.—

Here I found him, ever watchful for the work of love  
to do,

That white-winged one whose great glory you interpreted  
so true;

Still he folds the little fingers of that kneeling child to  
prayer,

On the grave which tells the story why it needs the  
angel's care;

Still above the forehead's glory arch the great wings  
wide unfurled

As alert to shield and succor all the orphans of the world.

---

## HOMAGE TO

---

Yet hath he but little honor in his home at Fano there  
O'er the cold neglected altar in the chapel blanched and  
bare;

Few come here to read his message in the little nest of  
towers,—

Few that worship where he watches, none that deck his  
shrine with flowers.

Thence I passed out on the ramparts, high above the  
olive trees,  
Skirting roofs and shadowy belfries, overlooking evening  
seas.

Into such a rose of sunset, such a tender twilight hue  
Where the orange sails came homeward on the Adriatic  
blue;

Oh, my poet, had you seen it, you had found the word  
to fit  
That sweet world of peace at even with God's love  
unfolding it!

There across the rose of sunset, through the perfect hush  
of things  
Stole a gentle rhythmic motion that might be the beat  
of wings.—

Art thou free at last, dear angel, art thou free to fly  
above,  
Leave that little one to slumber, quit the duty which is  
love,

Through the chiming Ave Mary spread those bird wings  
white as snow,  
Whether starwards, whether sunwards, be the way their  
angels go?

One more service yet, dear angel, find him there beyond  
the blue,  
Tell him how I loved the message he interpreted so true!

*From Volume 40 of the "Critic." Published with the  
permission of the editor.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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BROWNING AT ASOLO

BY ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

This is the loggia Browning loved,  
High on the flank of the friendly town;  
These are the hills that his keen eye roved,  
The green like a cataract leaping down  
To the plain that his pen gave new renown.

There to the West what a range of blue!—  
The very background Titian drew  
To his peerless Loves. O tranquil scene!  
Who than thy poet fondlier knew  
The peaks and the shore and the lore between?

See! yonder's his Venice,—the valiant Spire,  
Highest one of the perfect three,  
Guarding the others; the Palace Choir,  
The Temple flashing with opal fire,—  
Bubble and foam of the sunlit sea.

Yesterday he was part of it all,—  
Sat here, discerning cloud from snow  
In the flush of the Alpine afterglow,  
Or mused on the vineyard whose wine-stirred row  
Meets in leafy bacchanal.

Listen a moment—how oft did he!—  
To the bells from Fontalto's distant tower  
Leading the evening in . . . ah, me!  
Here breathes the whole soul of Italy,  
As one rose breathes with the breath of the bower.

Sighs were meant for an hour like this  
When joy is keen as a thrust of pain.  
Do you wonder the poet's heart would miss  
This touch of rapture in Nature's kiss,  
And dream of Asolo over again?

"Part of it yesterday" we moan?  
Nay, he is part of it now, no fear,  
What most we love we are that alone.  
His body lies under the minster stone,  
But the love of the warm heart lingers here.

*By permission from "Italian Rhapsody and Other Poems of Italy," published by the author, New York: 347 Madison Ave.*

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HOMAGE TOON THE BRONZE CLASPED HANDS OF  
ROBERT AND ELIZABETH BARRETT  
BROWNING

BY RUTH BALDWIN CHENERY

O, Poet-hands, so closely clasping there  
In that mute, shining bronze, that shall outlast  
Great centuries to be and, holding fast,  
Reveal to stranger eyes a love more fair,  
More even-weighted for each heart to share,  
Than any classic poet of the past  
Has sung to us, in mood however vast,  
Teach then, as now, clasped hands, that love is prayer.  
And when this bronze in farther ages still,  
Lies ruined, low, shattered in golden dust,  
Then shall the love it storied forth so long,  
Smiling at Death and Time, move to fulfil  
Its spacious task, moulding in joyous trust  
Sublimer purpose in sublimer song.

*From—At Vesper Time, p. 51, with permission of author.*

## CLASPED HANDS

BY ANNE CLEVELAND CHENEY

Hush! Let us dream awhile now, leaning near  
This wonder of two hands laid each in each,  
Enduringly, beyond mutation's reach,  
As king and queen lie carven on one bier.  
Thou fragile hand, thou strong—each deathless dear,  
E'en all those living songs, that quickening speech,  
Have not more potency to thrill and teach,  
Than this ineffably sweet emblem here.

So clasped forever, that the world may know  
Such union was, may nevermore forget;  
And lovers come as to a shrine and sigh,  
'So did their faith endure!' and softlier go;  
And poets kneel before these two palms met,  
To shrive themselves and pass more purely by.

*Poet Lore, Winter Number, Vol. 17, No. 4. Page No.  
102, and published with permission of editors.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## LEADERSHIP IN SONG

BY WALLACE W. LOVEJOY

Whom as leader shall we name  
Worthy of the highest fame?  
Dante Virgil took as guide;  
They made the journey side by side.  
They would the world-of-souls explore,  
The guide had been that way before.  
Ye who would like journey make  
A great-souled poet needs must take.

\* \* \* \* \*

Browning, when I met with thee,  
What to me was poesy?  
Jingling rhymes and quaint conceits,  
To be measured off by beats.  
'Twas my terse and virile thought  
That a better judgment taught.  
And through the years since then to admit  
A few with thee, enranked, to sit—  
Whitman, Wordsworth, Meredith,  
As masters of poetic pith.  
Keats, and Shelley,—earlier born,  
Who through darkness sang the dawn.  
Their singing robes still on, they passed  
To death; and with them, Byron,—last.  
In love we name them from their youth  
Still hold them to our hearts in ruth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though no singing voice awake,  
No lofty dream the silence break,  
Worship of the Muses cease,  
Pandora's direful plagues increase,—  
They still speak, the poet-dead.  
Reverently their shrines we tread  
And through the silence they draw nigh,  
The ancient bards of prophecy.  
And thy faith, taught from above,  
Browning,—with thy 'Lyric Love',  
Unveiled the Face that clearer grows—  
Our universe that feels and knows.

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H O M A G E      T O

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## TAKE HOME HER HEART

BY H. D. RAWNSLEY

(*A sonnet written on hearing that Robert Browning's wish to be buried beside his wife in Florence could not be fulfilled, and that, instead, his body was being brought home for sepulture in Westminster Abbey*)

## I

Take home the heart! her heart that cannot rest  
For all Italia's southern-hearted ground,  
Take home the heart that fire and fullness found  
In that sure heart which still would be its guest.  
Take home her heart! the heart that at its best  
Was bettered by his singing whose strong sound  
Was sweetened by her song, for she was crowned  
Queen of a heart that was her King confessed.

Hearts such as these have never ceased their beating,  
Hearts such as these by sympathy divine  
In dust will palpitate harmonious measure,  
And still I hear a spirit-voice entreating  
Let Arno give the Thames her poet treasure,  
One grave the mortal of immortals shrine!

## II

From Rivo Alto's silent palace hall,  
From San Michele's wilderness of flowers,  
Comes one for rest beneath our Abbey towers  
Whose song and soul shall never sleep at all:  
The crown of Venice shines above the pall;  
A brighter crown thy tireless spirit dowers;  
For thy strong heart the weakest heart empowers  
To "strive and thrive" fare forward, though we fall.

Singer of resolute Right, with Might for squire,  
Might for the morrow's battle, and the Must  
Of Truth triumphant with our latest breath,  
Lie here; for gentle Spenser can desire  
No knightlier guest, nor Chaucer in his dust  
A truer harp: Lie here—here comes no death.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 49; published with permission of author.*

## BROWNING'S SHRINE

BY JOHN HOWARD JEWETT

Plain, cloth-bound volumes, fit for homely use—  
Brown volumes, with their titles writ in gold,—  
Grown sacred now, and hallowed ever more,  
The seal of death new stamped across the name!

These front me on the shelves where, side by side,  
Great poets of the past assembled wait,  
With grand Te Deums for the listening soul  
Attuned to strains of beauty, love and truth;  
A symphony of throbbing human chords,—  
Imprisoned once in clay—poured out in song,  
And made perennial, for our starving need,  
By swift informing spirit, clothed in speech.  
That dies not with the breath.

## Recruited ranks

Of grand, immortal names, salute your peer,  
Who now has come to join the star-crowned choir! .  
'Tis Browning, latest from the battle's front,—  
Released from earth to share your immortelles,—  
Who stands beside you, clad in brown and gold.

\* \* \* \* \*

But yesterday, a living, loving friend,  
Today a phantom, fleeing through the dark,  
A poet of the past.

Nay! Nay! forgive  
The impotence of rash, misleading words,  
Which mock the ear and heart with false alarms.  
Thou art not dead, can never die the death  
Which locks mortality in voiceless tombs.  
No past can claim thee—singer of all time;  
No present set its seal upon thy worth.  
The legions of the future, thronging past,  
Shall halt to catch the harmonies divine,  
And hear and know, the voice that dauntless sang  
Of love, unblinded by the tears of earth;  
Of hope, dispelling clouds of darkest gloom;  
Of faith, surviving microscopic tests,  
Unshaken by the last analysis  
Of problems old or new.

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## H O M A G E      T O

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Oh, poet seer,  
Who dared all ages' foibles to lay bare;  
'To probe the wounds of frail humanity,  
With firmest touch of skill—yet loved his race;  
Its heritage of darkness made his own,  
To wrestle with, to conquer, or to share,  
Uniting with life's stern philosophy  
The brave, triumphant, steadfast song of cheer!

Strong, fearless, tender Browning!—Singing still.  
The ages yet to come are thine to bless;  
Theirs, to uprear the shrine begun to-day.

*From Boston Evening Transcript.*

### ANUEL'S SONG

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER

I knew thy secret from the first,  
When thy heart's fire upon me burst,  
With music led me on and on  
Through anguish, gropingly to prove the clew,  
Till sight and soul in unison  
Beheld the Secret from the first I knew.  
No triumph with the God be mine!  
Hakeem, in Djabal only, I divine—  
Love—in that sin-shamed human breast of thine!

*Taken from—Lips of Music, p. 116; published with the  
permission of the author.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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TO ROBERT AND ELIZABETH BARRETT  
BROWNING

BY MARION PELTON GUILD

I.

O mated souls, that through the blissful deeps  
Of heaven on heaven wing your ethereal way,  
Know ye how Love on earthly shores to-day  
For your true sake his feast in triumph keeps?  
Know ye how all the world of lovers heaps  
Its garlands on the living words that aye  
The holy passion of your vows shall say  
Till Song itself to gray oblivion creeps?  
The alpha and omega of the heart;  
The perfect scale, to its first note returning;  
Each fond detail, each jot of life or art,  
Touched with the fire upon the altar burning!  
While Genius smiles, a happy prisoner, caught  
In silver iterance of one sweet thought.

II.

Our modern Muse hath fever in her veins;  
Her lips, alas! have known the tainted springs;  
We turn afresh to where your fountain flings  
Its crystal challenge to all droughts and stains.  
Your white ideal, crowned with the truth, remains  
Steadfast amid the shock of baser things;  
Your love the golden seal of witness brings  
To Nature's charter pure, whereto man strains.  
Ah, if the mighty quests that now possess you  
Permit one pause of earth-revealing sight,  
Surely the blessing ye have wrought must bless you,  
A keener glow inform the heavenly light,  
Some finer echo of our praise must ring  
In those infinitudes where Love is king!

*From Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 86, pp. 420 and 421; published with permission of editors.*

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HOMAGE TO  
IN THE GARDEN OF THE VATICAN

*Dedicated to the New York Browning Society*

BY ALICE HARRIMAN

THE GUIDE SPEAKS

Here is the seat whereon His Holiness  
Loves best to sit—here by this ilex tree.

Ofttimes I've watched the care-lines smooth away  
Whilst he would watch the yellow-banded bees  
Sipping the honey from some lily rare;  
Or, heavy-legged with the dripping sweet,  
Beat throbibly their gauzy wings in homeward flight.

I've seen the flying shuttle of the loom we call  
The mind, pass and repass o'er his features worn,  
Carrying the threads of care, of pain, responsibility—  
Seldom of peace. Ah, me! How glints it 'gainst the rest!—  
And unbeknownst to him I've seen him weep.

I'm old, and hear not well.  
Find peace? Does he find peace? God knows.  
That comes when one rests full on God—when every  
thought is prayer;  
So he, as Vicar General of the World, should find  
It as the bees find honey in each weed and flower.

Here! Draw you back. He comes.  
Bend! Cross yourself!

(My idle clack will penance bring in the confessional!)

S-h-h! Now he's gone. And as I live,  
He came to get that book you saw me with as you  
passed by.

As I was telling you. His Holiness finds much  
To grieve, within, without, the Vatican.  
La! La! E'en yesterday I heard (repeat it not from me)  
That many do deny infallibility!  
But that is neither here nor there to me;  
I know my place, nor fret myself of God or man.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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About that book? Yes, here's the matter full:  
One day it fell, long, long ago,  
For I am old, yet 'twas but yesterday it seems,  
A gentle man, and grave,

Paced where you pace, questioned, as you, and sighed.  
He spoke of Asolo (his very tones breathed love for Italy),  
Of some Pope of the past—his name escapes me now—  
And said the book he held was one he wrote.

It's name? I know not. Printed words are naught  
to me.

And so I asked what he—no Catholic—had put  
him down.

I know not how he spoke. 'Twas as an inward flame  
Burst into speech as sunset clouds catch fire  
From that swift falling ball;  
And as he read my very soul was stirred with beauty,  
Although the words meant naught to me—

I doubt me an' they do to anyone.

But, here's the strangest thing—I've pondered long  
on it.

He left his book, and many times I've seen  
His Holiness read and reread that book  
(As did the one—God rest his soul—preceding him),  
With frowning, brooding brow, until the page is worn.

Mayhap he reads to scorch the lie—if 'tis a lie,  
With prayer and credo. You, with your largess  
(God's blessing fall on your beneficence)  
May know the rights of it—the words mean naught  
to me.

(Although I use words as a man of parts, I pick  
them up,  
As yonder parrot, shrieking in the sun.)

Here's what the man said ; so—

*"Correct the portrait by the living face,  
Man's God, by God's God in the mind of man."*

You see! 'Tis trash—mere words.

Yet why does he, His Holiness,  
Reflect on these?

*Published with permission.*

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HOMAGE TO

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A SEQUENCE OF SONNETS ON THE DEATH  
OF ROBERT BROWNING

BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

I.

The clearest eyes in all the world they read  
With sense more keen and spirit of sight more true  
Than burns and thrills in sunrise, when the dew  
Flames, and absorbs the glory round it shed,  
As they the light of ages quick and dead,  
Closed now, forsake us: yet the shaft that slew  
Can slay not one of all the works we knew,  
Nor death discrown that many-laurelled head.

The works of words whose life seems lightning wrought,  
And moulded of unconquerable thought,  
And quickened with imperishable flame,  
Stand fast and shine and smile, assured that nought  
May fade of all their myriad-moulded frame,  
Nor England's memory clasp not Browning's name.

*December 13th, 1889.*

II.

Death, what hast thou to do with one for whom  
Time is not lord, but servant? What least part  
Of all the fire that fed his living heart,  
Of all the light more keen than sundawn's bloom  
That lit and led his spirit, strong as doom  
And bright as hope, can aught thy breath may dart  
Quench? Nay, thou knowest he knew thee what thou art,  
A shadow born of terror's barren womb,  
That brings not forth save shadows. What art thou,  
To dream, albeit thou breathe upon his brow,  
That power on him is given thee,—that thy breath  
Can make him less than love acclaims him now,  
And hears all time sound back the word it saith?  
What part has thou then in his glory, Death?

III.

A graceless doom it seems that bids us grieve;  
Venice and winter, hand in deadly hand,  
Have slain the lover of her lovely strand  
And singer of a storm-bright Christmas eve.

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ROBERT BROWNING

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A graceless guerdon we that loved receive  
For all our love, from that the dearest land  
Love worshipped ever. Blithe and soft and bland,  
Too fair for storm to scathe or fire to cleave,  
Shone on our dreams and memories evermore  
The domes, the towers, the mountains and the shore  
That gird or guard thee, Venice: cold and black  
Seems now the face we loved as he of yore.  
We have given thee love—no stint, no stay, no lack:  
What gift, what gift is this thou hast given us back?

IV.

But he—to him, who knows what gift is thine,  
Death? Hardly may we think or hope, when we  
Pass likewise thither where tonight is he,  
Beyond the irremeable outer seas that shine  
And darken round such dreams as half divine  
Some sunlit harbor in that starless sea  
Where gleams no ship to windward or to lee,  
To read with him the secret of thy shrine.  
There too, as here, may song, delight and love,  
The nightingale, the sea-bird, and the dove,  
Fulfil with joy the splendor of the sky  
Till all beneath wax bright as all above:  
But none of all that search the heavens, and try  
The sun, may match the sovereign eagle's eye.

*December 14th.*

V.

Among the wondrous ways of men and time  
He went as one that ever found and sought  
And bore in hand the lamplike spirit of thought  
To illumine with instance of its fire sublime  
The dusk of many a cloudlike age and clime.  
No spirit in shape of light and darkness wrought,  
No faith, no fear, no dream, no rapture, nought  
That blooms in wisdom, nought that burns in crime,  
No virtue girt and armed and helmed with light,  
No love more lovely than the snows are white,  
No serpent sleeping in some dead soul's tomb,  
No song-bird singing from some live soul's height,  
But he might hear, interpret, or illumine  
With sense invasive as the dawn of doom.

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HOMAGE TO

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## VI.

What secret thing of splendor or of shade  
Surmised in all those wandering ways wherein  
Man, led of love and life and death and sin,  
Strays, climbs, or covers, allured, absorbed, afraid,  
Might not the strong and sunlike sense invade  
Of that full soul that had for aim to win  
Light, silent over time's dark toil and din,  
Life, at whose touch death fades as dead things fade?  
O spirit of man, what mystery moves in thee  
That he might know not of in spirit, and see  
The heart within the heart that seems to strive,  
The life within the life that seems to be,  
And hear, through all thy storms that whirl and drive,  
The living sound of all men's souls alive?

## VII.

He held no dream worth waking: so he said,  
He who stands now on death's triumphal steep,  
Awakened out of life wherein we sleep  
And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead.  
But never death for him was dark or dread:  
"Look forth" he bade the soul, and fear not. Weep,  
All ye that trust not in his truth, and keep  
Vain memory's vision of a vanished head  
As all that lives of all that once was he  
Save that which lightens from his word: but we,  
Who, seeing the sunset-colored waters roll,  
Yet know the sun subdued not of the sea,  
Nor weep nor doubt that still the spirit is whole,  
And life and death but shadows of the soul.

*December 15th.*

## DEAD IN VENICE

BY ARTHUR SYMONS

"Browning is dead": a nation's grief:  
But I too have my right to mourn,  
Being no otherwise forlorn  
Than soldiers who have lost their chief.

I see the field he won: I see

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ROBERT BROWNING

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The alien hosts he put to rout;  
But him I see no more: without  
The victor what is victory?

But he had conquered: that is well;  
Well that the latest sound of all  
Upon his dying ears to fall  
Before the final silence fell,

Was triumph. 'Twas the hour to end,  
The hour a kindly Fate (alas!),  
Who would not let him overpass  
Years that were still the strong man's friend,

Felicitously chose, ere yet  
The winter darkened round his days;  
And nought of pity mars our praise  
Nor sorrow dares be quite regret.

Dead? But to me that cannot be—  
Who loved him when a boy, nor still  
Can read that name without a thrill  
Which once was all-in-all to me;

Not dead, if dead means gone: death is  
A consecration, and doth give  
A surer life to those who live  
Immortal in our memories.

And what is here or there? Vain show!  
One life, a sleep between, he said,  
Who now knows all things that the dead,  
They who alone know all things, know.

But now That sleeps with closed eyes  
In Venice underneath the day;  
But now, but now, I can but lay  
My wreath upon him where he lies.

*From the Athaneum, Dec. 21, 1889, p. 860; published  
with kind permission of the editors and of the  
authors.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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PROSPEXIT

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON

I would hate that Death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,  
And bade me creep past.

Browning's *Prospice*.

He watched for it—met it—and conquered!  
With joy on his face,  
He fronted the Fear. But the darkness  
That shrouded the place  
In mystery, failed to affright him;  
For firmly and fast  
He clung to his faith—that somewhither  
Will triumph, at last,  
God's ends in this earthly creation—  
That Infinite Love,  
Will lift the true soul that can trust Him,  
All evils above!  
Why fear then? That trust was his anchor;  
Himself hath so said,  
*His* life shall be only beginning,  
When Death shall be dead!  
Why should not the smile on his features  
Betoken that he  
Saw the “soul of his soul” through a radiance  
None other might see?  
Clasped hands with her—named her in rapture—  
Reached forth, as if drawn  
By fingers invisible—faltered  
One word—and was gone!

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 87\*; in The Critic, April 5, 1890; in The Independent.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### IN THE POET'S CORNER

BY KATHARINE LEE BATES

Do they hold converse, keen as wine,  
Under the pavement, they  
Who make, in truth, the royal line  
Of England, kings by right divine,  
Crowned with the bay?

Yet one is lonely in that great,  
Rejoicing fellowship,  
—Lonely with Chaucer for a mate,  
And Spenser, Dreamland's laureate,  
He hears the drip

Of Florence dews upon a mound  
That golden tides of spring  
Mantle with bloom, the angel-sound  
Of Nightingales that all around  
Her silence sing.

*From Boston Browning Society, 1909-1910, p. 13; published with permission of the Society and of the author.*

## ROBERT BROWNING

By E. F. BRIDELL-FOX

Stand still, true poet that you are,  
I know you; let me try and draw you.  
Some night you'll fail us. When afar  
You rise, remember one man saw you,  
Knew you, and named a star.

The poet died last month, and now  
The world which had been somewhat slow  
In honouring his living brow,  
Commands the palms.

*Taken from an article by E. F. Bridell-Fox in The Argosy, Number 291, February, 1890.*

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H O M A G E      T O

## ROBERT BROWNING

BY FLORENCE COATES

"Never say of me that I am dead!"

Greathearted son of the Titan mother, Earth,  
Fed at her breast,  
He builded upward from the solid ground,  
While listening ever for the heavenly sound  
Of higher voices, to his soul addressed.

The elemental mother, lending might  
With vital breath,  
Made him, with her instinctive courage, brave;  
And the immortals to his spirit gave  
Their deeper knowledge and their scorn of death.

So evermore with energy and joy,  
He followed Truth:  
Still for the message and the vision sought,  
Still to the temple of her worship brought  
The imagination of unaging youth;

And in its largeness ever, viewing life,  
Perceived its goal  
To be beyond the bounds of space or time.  
He strove to picture it in powerful rhyme;  
But what he painted ever—was the soul!

Ay, 't was the soul that moved, delighted him,  
Absorbed his care,  
From early days in English Camberwell  
To that far hour when tolled for him a knell,  
Mournful across the deep, from Venice the all-fair.

Voiceless he sleeps, his giant task performed;  
But in his stead,  
Brave Caponsacchi, poignantly alive,  
Pippa, beloved Pompilia, and Clive,  
Forbid the world to think of him as dead!

*From Florence Coates Poems, Vol. II, pp. 66-67; published with permission of the author.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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DIVIDED  
BY URSULA TANNENFORST

She sleeps near cypress-shadows blackly strown  
Where white and tall the cross-crowned column stands;  
All round her rest the dead from many lands;  
Proud tombs that tower near some simple stone,  
Nameless, and by a number marked alone;  
Graves, graves, and flowers sown by loving hands  
Crowded together, till the law commands  
No more be buried. From their sunlit throne  
The Apennines look o'er her as she lies  
Where long ago their double tomb was made  
That both might sleep beneath Italian skies.  
Speak, "grateful Florence," let his dust be laid  
By hers! From Venice, where he closed his eyes,  
Bring Browning back, nor deem thy trust betrayed.

Venice, in English verse how oft have rung  
The praises of the city of the sea!  
Each poet brought his boon of love to thee;  
Now noblest tribute take from laurels flung  
O'er Browning's bier! By him thy song was sung,  
And in thine arms he died. Rejoice, that he  
Hath loved thee like a son, O Italy!  
And watched prophetic while thy freedom sprung  
From Apennines to ocean. Lo! complete  
He hailed that vision, dawning ere she died,  
His "lyric love," and graven on his heart  
Was "Italy." O death, thy touch seems sweet,  
So softly rounding, by the sea's fair bride,  
That wondrous whole of life and love and art!

Divided! Earth to earth now lies at last  
In sculptured aisle of England's abbey-shrine  
The noblest son of Europe's poet-line  
Since silence sank on Goethe's trumpet-blast.  
Yet softly sighs a whisper, floating past,—  
"Thine Italy adored, O love, grew mine,  
With thee new life I won when loves divine  
Called soul and song to freedom fresh and vast.  
Fair is the Florence of our home the tread  
Of pilgrims pauses near my peaceful mound,  
And I had thought my grave held room for thee;

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HOMAGE TO

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Yet England claims thee, where her poet-dead  
Rest round thy tomb. Among the laurel-crowned  
For love's sweet sake—not fame's—find room for me!"

Not for the love of thy fair place of rest,  
Nor even for thy verse, whose "golden ring"  
Thine England close to Italy doth bring,  
Should yonder grave upon the hillside's crest  
Hold thee 'neath Tuscan flowers longer pressed  
While he who helped thy heart's best blossoming  
Who soared beside thee on his own strong wing,  
Lies far away. A sepulchre unblest!  
Long like a dream of love before the lands  
Ye stood in poet-union fitly bound  
On some fair height, our common earth above,  
'Twere shame did death divide those wedded hands!  
Nay; bind Italian unto English ground  
In golden union both of verse and love.

England and Florence linked in golden rhyme  
Young Milton, when he "changed fair Thames's stream  
For lovely Arno," while the early gleam  
Of poet-glory prophesied his prime.  
England and Florence met in matchless chime  
When, love inspired, she sang of freedom's dream,  
And bade Aurora's tale the worth redeem  
Of woman's minstrelsy, with voice sublime.  
England, thy roll of poet-graves reads wrong  
If Florence, filled with all her mighty dead,  
Keeps England's daughter of a deathless song!  
Unclose that tomb, and lay her laurelled head  
By his; more dear to her the abbey's gloom  
By him than Florence when her flowers bloom!

*From Poet Lore, II, pp. 193 to 195; published with the  
permission of the editor.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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## THE REZZONICO PALACE

(*"A Roberto Browning, morto in questo palazzo"*)

BY ARTHUR UPSON

Low stars and moonlight beauty disavow  
That death has ever known her; but around  
Her melancholy portals only sound  
Of waters makes her music; and the brow  
Of stately wall records the legend how  
"Died in this palace" a poet Love once crowned.  
Here the cold Angel that strong harp unbound:  
How chill and silent seem her chambers now!  
O World, if ever moon should wander here  
Where builds my heart its palace for your song,  
And find such tablet in the outer wall,  
The poet dead, the chambers still and drear,  
Let not its hollow beauty win the throng  
To reverence, but let it perish all!

*From "The City, a Poem Drama, and Other Poems";  
published with permission of Mrs. Arthur Upson.*

## THE IRIS-BRIDGE

BY HELEN GRAY CONE

That morn when men to one another said  
"Browning is dead in Venice," ere the thrill  
Of the tidings touched us, lo! our eyes beheld  
Strange portent flashed upon the winter sky.  
From hill to hill the jewel-splendid span  
Of the light rainbow leaped, transcendent joy,  
The brave, bright, delicate bridge, frail as a flower,  
Yet firm enough to bear the feet of Hope.  
—"Browning is dead," they told us; but our thoughts  
Followed along the aerial sun-built arch  
The onward quest of that still ardent soul.  
Could he be holden of death, who built indeed,  
Flinging his lyric faith across the vast,  
An iris-bridge for man while words endure?

*From Boston Browning Society, 1909-1910, p. 17; published with permission of the Society.*

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## HOMAGE TO

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### SALVE

BY CHARLOTTE PENDLETON

*Browning Is Dead!* Was is yesterday  
Or a thousand misty years ago,  
While ghoulish shadows, to and fro,  
Flit o'er the lamp where the flame was housed,  
And blink in the light of the rising day?

What matter, I say, friends, though my clay  
Still lie in Italy all unhoused,  
When the soul that informed it is away;  
*Browning Is Dead!*

Though already the shadows gather between  
And mystery shroud my mortal way,  
For that other star with mine, serene,  
Commingles once more in a deathless ray,  
And our married souls, within the screen  
Were kissing, as earth sighed yesterday,  
*Browning Is Dead!*

*From Poet Lore, Vol. 1, p. 545; published with the permission of the editor.*

### LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BY REV. WILLIAM BRUNTON

Oh, dear departed saints of highest song!  
Behind the screen of time your love lay hid,  
Its full unfoldment was in life forbid—  
As doing such divine affection wrong,  
But now we read, with interest deep and strong,  
And lift from off the magic jar the lid,  
And Lo! your spirit stands the clouds amid,  
  
And speaks to us in some superior tongue!  
Devotion such as yours is heavenly-wise,  
And yet the possible of earth ye show;  
Ye dwellers of the blue of summer skies,  
Through you a finer love of love we know;  
It is as if the angels moved with men,  
And key of paradise is found again!

---

ROBERT BROWNING

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LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING AND  
ELIZABETH BARRETT  
ANONYMOUS

Forgive, sweet Lovers of this book,  
The sad, who scan your story;  
Forgive their wistful eyes that look . . . .  
Forgive, sweet Lovers of this book,  
Their knowledge where your fingers shook,  
Their watching of your glory!  
Forgive, sweet Lovers of this book,  
The sad, who scan your story.

Accept, true Lovers, here enshrined,  
The few who share your gladness  
In touch of heart and soul and mind;  
Accept true Lovers, here enshrined,  
Their seeing of themselves defined,  
Their growth to joy, from sadness . . . .  
Accept, true Lovers here enshrined,  
The few who share your gladness.

Condone, great Lovers—being dead,  
The printing of these pages;  
Nor shrink that we—we, too, have read;  
Condone, great Lovers—being dead,  
Our vision of the Gold you shed  
For hearts in coming ages . . . .  
Condone, great Lovers, being dead,  
The printing of these pages.

BROWNING

BY LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

That longed-for door stood open, and he passed  
On through the star-sown fields of light, and stayed  
Before its threshold, glad and unafeard.  
Since all that Life and Death could do at last  
Was over, and the hour so long forecast  
Had brought his footsteps thither. Undismayed  
He entered. Were his lips on her lips laid?  
God knows. They met, and their new day was vast.

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HOMAGE TO  
THE POET'S HOME-GOING

BY H. D. RAWNSLEY

*"I shall soon depart for Venice on my way homeward."*  
Extract from a letter of Browning's written to a friend  
a few weeks before his death.

His heart was where the summer ever shines,  
He saw the English swallow eastward come,  
And still among the olives and the vines,  
Or underneath the dark sun-scented pines  
Of Asola, he hummed his latest lines,  
And bade his white-winged songs go flying home.

Then when the red sails round by Lido came  
To rest, and idle now the gondolier  
Beneath the Lion and those masts aflame,  
Guessed fingers in the old Venetian game,  
A dark boat neared. Death called the poet's name,  
Then straight toward the sunset seemed to steer.

Another prow pushed quay-wards, wrought of gold,  
Pure gold, and with the lily in her hand  
The Maid, whose virgin arms did once enfold  
The world's Salvation, leaned to bless the hold,  
And smile on him whose music had extolled  
The Lion and the Lily of the land.

• • • • •  
Then up into the lordly Palace Hall  
Bright angels passed to lead him to the shore,  
And o'er his body did they lay for pall  
Italia's love and England's loss, and all  
Cried, "He whose spirit the Heaven from Earth doth call,  
Freed men, and lo, is freed for evermore."

• • • • •  
"Yea freed the most to find his being whole,  
'The broken arc, in Heaven a perfect round';  
Free with the freedom of that kindred soul  
Whose love and life through all the under-roll

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## HOMAGE TO

---

Of sorrowful dark, has kept him to the goal,  
And free to utter his full self in sound."

Then with those angels silently he went,  
Pushed from the steps, left Venice flaming bright  
Above her sunset waters; backward bent  
Towers shook, so swift astern the waves were sent  
Domes danced, and still the harp's accompaniment  
Came with his voice to call us toward the light.

And other voices called, for other prows  
Pushed after, gorgeous, sweet for myrtle flowers,  
With long-robed men therein, upon whose brows  
Were caps of honour such as he who knows  
Bellini's Doge can tell of, men of vows  
By their tight lips, the men who built the towers.

Alas! they cried, "To what far island steers  
The boat that bears our poet-soul away?  
We built the city, but his glory rears  
Anew the walls, eternal as the years;  
We took the sea to marriage, but he wears  
The ring that weds our Venice. Let him stay!"  
• • • • • • •

Then the stars paled, yet paled not that bright star,  
But grew: the grey sea heaved from dusk to gold,  
And sailing we were ware of hills afar—  
The amethystine hills where angels are—  
That rose from burnished calm no tempests mar  
To skies of peace that never can grow old.  
• • • • • • •

We neared the land, and multitudes foreknew  
His coming, waved a forestry of palm.  
The singer's face most like an angel grew,  
Far off we saw what fires rekindled flew  
Forth from his eyes, as near the vessel drew,  
And o'er the waves to meet us came a psalm.

"O girder of Truth's sword upon men's thigh,  
And looser of men's fear for mortal harm,  
If but they leave their castles to the sky,

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## HOMAGE TO

---

And go forth dauntless when the foe draws nigh,  
Thine was the clarion call to victory  
Against the world's inevitable swarm!"

Then to the singer did they bring a crown,  
And thoughts that long had struggled unto birth  
Took form melodious, wonderful, full-grown,  
And many souls come near to him half known,  
Souls strong through loss and loving like his own,  
Friends of his mind and making upon earth.

On either side to let him forward move  
The gracious congregation did divide;  
But those clear eyes that flashed for joy to prove  
The bliss of recognition seemed to rove,  
As looking for fulfilment of all love,  
As yearning still, and still unsatisfied.

. . . . .

E'en as he gazed, with amaranth on her brow,  
And all the long upgathered love of years,  
Came one whose eyes from distance seemed to know  
Her bliss his perfect glory; with such glow  
Souls met and mingled, the sad Earth below  
Felt the far joy in Heaven, and ceased from tears.

*From the Browning Centenary, pp. 14 to 18; published  
with permission of the author.*

BROWNING

BY A. BENNETT

In the "quiet-coloured ending" of the golden afternoon,  
Robed and crowned with flowers and moving to the  
ripple's lulling tune  
Did they bear the body of the Master o'er the grey lagoon.

At the prow there beamed an angel. Was it such Guer-  
cino drew?  
From the stern a lion's kingly front victorious rose to  
view.  
He with voice of angel, heart of lion, lay between the two.

---

ROBERT BROWNING

---

Followed him in tearful silence down the dim unpavener  
way  
“Certain people of importance,” “men and women” such  
as they  
Live and love and laugh and weep undying in his death-  
less lay.

Singer of her “dear dead women,” he who drew her pale  
decline,  
Took the golden hair, embalmed it in his rich majestic  
line,  
Venice bore him on her bosom poured his latest anodyne.  
Not as to the sombre English Abbey, there to join his  
peers,  
Let us dream of him, in pageant borne amid a nation’s  
tears—  
Rather in the still Venetian twilight, led of gondoliers  
Down the lanes of light and twinkling amber that the  
sunset flings  
O’er the city “where the Doges used to wed the sea with  
rings,  
Where St. Mark’s is,”—where died one of Poesy’s su-  
premest kings.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 67.\**

*Fulfilled, December 12, 1889*  
Oh, the blessed fruition  
Of peace out of pain!  
Of a light without darkness,  
A clasping again!  
Of a full soul’s reunion  
In Love’s endless reign!

Sing, O Earth, with new joy  
At this victory won!  
For the faith that endured  
'Till the setting of sun!  
For the hope that shone clear  
Through the mighty work done!  
For the love that sought God  
To guide love here begun!  
Sing, O Earth, with new joy  
For such victory won!

*From The Brownings and America, p. 103; published  
with permission.*

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HOMAGE TOBROWNING  
BY HENRIETTA HUXLEY

This day within the Abbey, where of old  
Our kings were sepulchred, a King of song  
That, like his life, was truthful, pure and strong,—  
Browning among his peers is laid to rest,  
Borne to the grave by loving hearts, and stoled  
In shining raiment that his genius wove.  
No lingering sickness his: with swift surprise  
Death flashed the Light Eternal in his eyes,  
And blinded Life. So this way he was blest.  
Perhaps in some far star he now has met  
His rose of love, his ne'er forgotten wife.  
And they again, as once, in spirit blent,  
Look through the veil this day, and hear the fret  
Of many feet; the swelling music spent  
On mourning listeners. With voices low,  
Chanting *her* hymn, the boys sing as they go  
“He giveth his belovéd sleep.” What though  
The perishable forms these two once wore,  
In different lands lie sundered by the sea?  
Their spirits smile, at this our fond regret.  
“What matters anything since we have met?”  
They radiant sing. “Together, oh what more  
Can love long parted from the Eternal crave?”  
And if there be no meeting past the grave,  
If all is darkness, silence, still ’tis rest.  
Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,  
For “God still giveth his belovéd sleep,”  
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best!

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 67.\**

IN MEMORIAM—ROBERT BROWNING  
BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN

## I.

Grim Harvester, Death, thou hast gathered in the curve  
of thy sickle keen  
A ripe shock of mellowest corn—fair fruitage for centu-  
ries to glean;  
But though golden and ripe for the reaper, we grudge  
such a harvest of worth,

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

In its fullness of aureate splendour, should be lost to  
man's vision on earth.

2.

In fruition of years and of glory hath passed to his rest  
the Seer,  
Whose inwardly-piercing vision through man's universe  
rangéd clear,  
Whose oracles pregnant and strong—as a Hebrew  
prophet's of old—  
New glimpses of truth aye revealed to eyes gifted with  
sense to behold.

3.

We mourn for the thinker whose thought disdained the  
mean level of men,  
Sounding down to hid depths of their being, soaring  
upward beyond their ken,  
Threading with insight unerring—a Seer-spirit's intuitive  
force—  
Each subtle and devious bye-path of man's life's labyrinthine  
course.

4.

With lute still attuned and voiceful, the hand from its  
strings that awoke  
With masterly skill new beauties by each music-sensitive  
stroke,  
Lies numb'd in death, and the tongue whose tones were  
so pure and strong  
Is hushed, and will never more rapture our souls with its  
magical song.

5.

A blank dreary stillness thus reigns where resonant  
music—voiced  
To man's deepest thought and his sorrow, bringing solace  
or strength that rejoiced—  
Lately gladdened our ears—and we, with the gathering  
silence grown dumb  
In voiceless sympathy wail our song-bereaved years to  
come.

6.

Sons of the dead Prophet, we mourn the orphaning doom  
we have met,

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## HOMAGE TO

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We grieve that one Seer less remains to chide human  
folly and fret,  
That a Star of rare brilliance and guidance is gone from  
our human sky,  
And the dark of man's world has grown denser for every  
discerning eye.

### 7.

Yet may we still warm in the sun,—though its orb we,  
with boding unrest,  
Have watchéd in sunset glory sink in the gold clouds of  
the West,—  
Thoughts that the world may have chill'd in the depths  
of its frozen night—  
True feelings that Self may have blunted, as a flower is  
stunted with blight.

### 8.

“Stored Sunshine” we hold in his writings, packed daintily  
for our joy,  
As men store the soul of the Lightning, and its force and  
its radiance employ;  
The sunlight condensed in his pages, that should make  
men enlightened and free,  
Will, long as our language is spoken, give strength to  
our children to be.

### 9.

True, we who rejoiced in his presence, in the light of his  
winsome smile,  
We, of our sorrows and doubts whose word-witchery  
served to beguile,  
We, in the night of bereavement, must endure its lack  
and its pain;  
The sweet sentience of Love, death-smitten, on earth  
revives never again.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 30.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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IDOL AFFECTIONS

*Inscribed to Robert Browning*

BY CLARA BLOOMFIELD MOORE

*Our idols are our executioners.—Amiel.  
God's care be God's.—Browning.*

There is no day of all my years whereon  
I could not darken every sunniest hour  
With memories of my life that was, before  
God drew our distant paths near and more near.  
I know the Hand which broke before my face  
The idols I had wrought from clay and clothed  
In golden raiment, then within my heart  
Installed, as on an altar-shrine, to fall  
And crush me where I knelt,—more merciless  
Than mediæval priests who racked the saints,  
Yet spared their tortured frames when strength waxed  
low.

Ah, then I thought my heart a sepulchre,  
Where only weeds and noisome things would dwell,  
In which no ray could ever shine again!  
Unto this place of graves thou didst not scorn  
To come, dear friend, bringing a jewelled lamp  
To hang above the empty shrine, and flash  
Its beams where now for weeds lie flowers which  
gained

Their birth and growth in gardens of the soul.  
Like incense doth their perfume rise, by day  
And night, to heaven, as rise my prayers to God  
In thanks for such a matchless gift as thine,—  
Renewed like amaranth blooms as seasons roll.  
What can I do but trust the Hand which worked  
Such marvels for me when I prayed for death?  
“God's care be God's”: I wait upon His will  
To lift all shadows from my life that shines.  
“God's care be God's”: I'll leave to Him His task,  
And, trusting in His love, forget to ask.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 109.\**

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H O M A G E      T O

## ROBERT BROWNING

BY C. P. CRANCH

Themes strong, verse blood-warm with the limbs and veins  
Of life at full flush; yet as when one sees  
Some unknown Grecian youth Praxiteles  
Or Phidias raised from flesh on Attic plains  
Into perennial marble, the coarse stains  
Of corporal frailty cleansed by ministries  
Of art divine from all impurities,  
Till of crude fact the living soul remain,—  
So with the touch of genius wrought this seer  
Of passion and of truth, till heart and mind  
Share in the vigor of the fleshy frame.  
Though palpable to sense his forms appear,  
In the soul's life transfigured and refined  
The higher art that nature makes, they claim.

*From "Browning Memorial," published with the permission of the Boston Browning Society.*

## ROBERT BROWNING

BY AUBREY DE VERE

## I.

Gone from us! that strong singer of late days—  
Sweet singer should be strong—who, tarrying here,  
Chose still rough music for his themes austere,  
Hard-headed, aye but tender-hearted lays,  
Carefully careless, garden half, half maze.  
His thoughts he sang, deep thoughts to thinkers dear,  
Now flashing under gleam of smile or tear,  
Now veiled in language like a breezy haze  
Chance-pierced by sunbeams from the lake it covers.  
He sang man's ways—not heights of sage or saint,  
Not highways broad, not haunts endeared to lovers;  
He sang life's byways, sang its angles quaint,  
Its Runic lore inscribed on stave or stone;  
Song's short-hand strain,—its key oft his alone.

## II.

Shakespeare's old oak "gnarled and unwedgeable"  
Yields not so sweet a wood to harp or lyre

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## ROBERT BROWNING

---

As tree of smoother grain; and chorded shell  
Is spanned by strings tenderer than iron wire.  
What then? Stern tasks iron and oak require!  
Iron deep-mined, hard oak from stormy fell:  
Steel-armed the black ship breasts the ocean's swell,  
Oak-ribbed laughs back the raging tempest's ire.  
Old friend, thy song I deem a ship whose hold  
Is stored with mental spoils of ampler price  
Than Spain's huge galleons in her age of gold,  
Or Indian carracks from the isles of spice.  
Brave Argosy! cleave long the waves as now;  
And all the sea-gods sing around thy prow!

*From Macmillan's Magazine, the New York Times,  
Sunday, Feb. 16, 1890.*

### AT BROWNING'S GRAVE

BY H. D. RAWNSLEY

*7th May, 1912*

Come forth ye great immortals from your sleep,  
And swell today our glad memorial throng,  
Ye sowed the golden seed of thought, we reap  
Your deathless fruit of song.

Come not as victors with a flash of swords,  
Nor clad in war's impenetrable mail,  
But crowned with laurels, armed with fiery words,  
Whose music shall not fail.

Leave your fair halls of melody and psalm,  
To join in honour to our spirit-guest  
—The man who taught us Right must bear the  
palm,  
And Love in Heaven find rest.

Therefore to-day, in this most holy place,  
Where still the harps that helped the ages ring,  
We thank the Eternal Father for his grace,  
Who bade the prophet sing.

*From the Browning Centenary, p. 12; published with  
permission of the author.*

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H O M A G E      T O

## BROWNING

ANONYMOUS

No, not once more amid the funeral train,  
With softened grief, do I desire to see,  
A friend enshrined in that great canopy,  
Of England's glory, or to hear the strain  
Of honour surge around his senseless brain.  
Too often have I joined the minstrelsy,  
Which there emblazons on our history  
An everlasting name: no, not again.

But as I note the hour, and mourn apart,  
'Twill be to think there is another grave,  
And greater tomb than that where they would save  
And seal the laurels of a poet's art.  
More deeply buried than in aisle or nave:  
His resting place is in a nation's heart.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 51\*; also in  
St. James Gazette.*

## AT BROWNING'S GRAVE

BY ALFRED FORMAN

Ashes to ashes! Dust again to dust!  
Once more the solemn words upon the ear  
Are launched in love and worship. Let no tear  
Betoken in us any lack of trust

That here a mighty life has found its just  
And unbewailable and perfect end.  
Here at thy grave, as Poet, Man, and Friend.  
We hail thee blest, as all who know thee must.

Through piled and woven flowers our living heart  
Yearns downward to thy dead one. Love and Pride  
Contend in us which owns the greater part.  
Farewell? We leave thee where thou dost abide,  
In twofold aspect of thy life and art,  
The greatest Englishman since Milton died.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 51\*; also in  
Court Circular.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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AT 29 DE VERE GARDENS

BY F. T. PALGRAVE

*28th December, 1889*

Twilight and peace in the chamber;  
Twilight of death and peace  
For him who the strife, the long battle of life,  
Had fought out to the last release:

Dead in a dying City,  
Through her silent water-ways sped  
Toward the misty West, and the place of rest  
And gray home of the mighty dead.

Now bathed in silence and twilight  
Where with wisdom's roseate glow,  
Quick lightnings of wit, the chamber was lit  
So lately,—yet so long ago:

Where eyes that from youth ne'er looked on me  
But the heart's bright message they bore,—  
The welcoming lip, the hand's honest grip,  
Were mine—mine now never more:—

There with amaranth cross, and bay-wreath,  
*Inane munus*, I strove,  
Knelt there and pray'd where they said he was laid;  
To do the last office of love;

Love reverent, grateful, deep,  
For the treasure that only they,  
The poets of Love, the wise from Above,  
To the world in its deadness convey:

For he, Star-crested, Hope-armour'd,  
Struck straight at a swelling tide;  
In the valley of doubt, with clarion shout,  
Chased coward and doubter aside.

Then the vanish'd Presence in brightness  
Was felt once more in the room,  
While the worn-out shred the great spirit had shed  
Lay garnish'd and still for the tomb.

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## HOMAGE TO

---

Not there was the soul I had loved,  
Where the mortal raiment was laid,—  
Death's fast vanishing spoil, the lamp without oil  
The blank sheath of the God-wrought blade,—  
Bare walls of man's house, where no fire  
On the central hearth-stone glows!—  
Till silently round me a vapour of sound,  
The music of memory, rose:—

*And Blest are the dead in the Lord;  
For they rest from their labours, I heard;  
With a Love is best!—and the life now at rest  
Was summ'd in that one brief word.*

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 49.\**

## BROWNING

BY E. R. CHAPMAN

Undaunted spirit, who didst help us best—  
Best help the world—by being glad and strong,  
Still proving gloriously that strength and song  
Are not disjoined—not yet—take thou thy rest!

Rest well! Thy country clasps thee to her breast,  
See, in her Abbey; thy disciples throng  
To greet thee these historic aisles among,  
Too true to thee to mourn—to weep too blest.

And thou, brave heart, grieve thou not overmuch  
If in that distant Flower-city fair  
Thy lyric love lies evermore alone.

Your souls are one; your disrobed spirits touch,  
Re-wedded, glad—and England, for her share,  
Crowned you long since upon a common throne.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 50.\**

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### TO BROWNING

BY WALTER S. BIGELOW

Stones of Venice! a heart has turned cold that had often  
beat high,  
Living over the lives of the men you have seen in their  
prime;  
Whom it knew by the record brought down from an  
earlier time;  
Whom it loved with such love, that its ardour forbade  
them to die.

From a lyre held so close that the heart's every passionate  
beat  
Drew a sigh or a song from its sensitive, sonorous strings,  
Rose to heaven—like a bird with a message between her  
white wings—  
Blended strains of the present and past, in a music  
complete.

Faithful heart! that turned cold only now, at the touch  
of that foe  
Whom it feared not: whose coming it hailed, with a joy  
undissembled:  
Friend, not foe, who should bring it once more to *her*  
breast; and it trembled,  
Not with dread, but a yearning desire for the summons  
to go.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 126.\**

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## ROBERT BROWNING

BY MICHAEL FIELD

Slowly we disarray,  
Our leaves grow few,  
Few on the bough, and many on the sod:  
Round him no ruining autumn tempest blew,  
Gathered on genial day,  
He fills, fresh as Apollo's bay,  
The Hand of God.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, No. 10, p. 28,\*  
also Academy Dec. 21, 1889.*

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HOMAGE TO

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## ROBERT BROWNING

*An Acrostic Sonnet. In Memoriam*

BY THOMAS HUTCHINSON

Robed in the beauty of a blameless life,  
Our poet sleeps, whose name Time will revere;  
Blest in the love of those he held most dear  
Ere he was called to join his poet-wife.  
Remembering aye God's will of good is rife,  
The thought of death to him gave doubt nor fear,  
But hope unending; wherefore sob or tear?—  
Removed is he from earthly care and strife.  
*Of* human hearts the workings well he knew,  
Was conversant with their most secret throes,  
Nor cared to sing his songs in minor keys;  
*In* human hearts his message echoes true:—  
Not pain, not sorrow comes at lifetime's close;  
Great though the change, greater the after-peace.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 29.\**

## A SONNET ON BROWNING

ANONYMOUS

Calm, O thou mighty heart, and cold, thou hand,  
Calm calm and cold in the beloved clime  
Amid whose magic rose the deathless rhyme,  
Ringing like tocsin through our sleeping land.  
O dear dead voice, thy half-divine command  
Called forth creations durabler than time,  
Life's epic pictures, earth's lyric mime,  
God-singer whom but few may understand.

Oft caught thy firm keen eyes the fields of morn,  
From the high silence of the Pisgah-peak  
Whence flashed their glory on marchers far below;  
Now that for thee love's light of light is born,  
O dear dead voice, if we could hear thee speak,  
How thou wouldest tell what all are fain to know.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 75.\**

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ROBERT BROWNING

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ON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF  
ROBERT BROWNING

BY H. J. BULKELEY

Dead! But it is not possible. That mind,  
That energy, that hope can never die.  
Time to our music deaf, our beauty blind,  
May kill all, all but thy vitality.

Can never die! Not while this England lasts,  
Nor while our English tongue its force and fame  
O'er all the world in widening circle casts,  
Shall pale the lustre of thy peerless name.

O fighter brave, as in thy *Prospice*  
Thou that last fight has fought, and to thy breast  
Thy soul's soul thou hast clasped again. Ah! she  
And thou—with God 'tis safe to leave the rest.

But we would crown thee here as well as there,  
Crown thee and her together, king and queen.  
Through all its aeons such a regal pair,  
Beauteous and strong, the world has never seen.

And shall it ever see?—Her tenderness,  
Her lofty passion, rush of wingéd words  
Pregnant with love and life—And less and less  
We need be taught the temper of thy sword's

Flashing and piercing; thou who man as men  
To us presented in such varied throngs  
Through all its common-places new and then  
The world would wonder, as their proper songs

Sang all and each, but never one the same  
Diverse in mood and character and time,  
Diverse as pain from joy, as snow from flame;  
But through them all still rang a subtle rhyme.

Subtle and strong and true, of mind and soul  
And art and love and God. Here Cleon stands  
Musing of art that would ensphere the whole;  
And here Pompilia wrings those hopeless hands.

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## H O M A G E      T O

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Here an Apostle dying leaves to doubt  
A noble mission. Here a Caliban  
Reasons of God. Here with a stupid shout  
Of thanks to Christ men burn their fellow man.

Here Martin Relph would half conceal his sin,  
Blurting it out. Here noble Luria dies  
For trustless Florence; horse and rider win  
Good news for Ghent; the gipsy duchess flies

Back to her liberty; unconscious paints  
His life that famous master, or unknown  
He fills the empty aisles with babes and Saints,  
Who used his art for Art and God alone.

Here Paracelsus knows and sins, but loves  
And dies. Here David's music draws the stars.  
Sordello here his art to action moves,  
And failing triumphs; Clive his crowns and scars

Tops with one boyish deed; high Strafford falls;  
The trodden Jew from scorn and hatred frees  
His soaring faith; sweet Pippa, passing, calls  
To souls; Balaustion chants Euripides.

Abt Vogler here may raise his walls of sound;  
The Arab lose his horse for love; the sage,  
Ferishtah, hint the truth; lo! one fierce bound,  
False Gauthier grovels. So from page to page

Weaves the magician robes and thoughts for all,  
And yet doth clothe himself in every mood;  
As some great actor in a carnival  
Puts on a warrior's helm, a friar's hood,

An angel's wreath, a demon's horns and head,  
Is everyone in turn, and yet the eyes  
Of her whose vision by her love is led  
Sees him, her loved one, in each new disguise;

So did we love to see thee, many, one;  
So didst thou teach that wide philosophy  
In shapes as various as the hues that run  
Through the great bow that blendeth earth and sky

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## ROBERT BROWNING

---

In coloured harmony. So many voices,  
And yet one mind that all informed and blest!  
O poet, master, each of us rejoices,  
Must still rejoice in all that good and best

Thou hast so generously poured out to teach us,  
Our minds and souls; we learn and still are glad.  
From that new life canst thou no longer reach us?  
There sing without *our* praise? We are not sad.

We cannot be, for thou hast left for knowing,  
For thinking, loving, all thy works and thee.  
They praise thee best who best to God are showing  
Them thou hast taught to know, to love, to be;  
That in their souls some little seeds are growing,  
In blessing showered from thou bounteous tree;  
Some little sparks of keener fancy glowing,  
Kindled at thy rich flame of poesy;  
Some little streams of faith and freedom flowing  
To pulse accordant with thy boundless sea.

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, pp. 68-70.\**

### THE BURIAL OF ROBERT BROWNING

BY MICHAEL FIELD

Upon St. Michael's Isle  
They laid him for awhile  
That he might feel the Ocean's full embrace,  
And wedded be  
To that wide sea—  
The subject and the passion of his race.  
As Thetis, from some lovely under-ground  
Springing, she girds him round  
With lapping sound  
And silent space:  
Then, on more honor bent,  
She sues the firmament  
And bids the hovering, western clouds combine  
To spread their sabled amber on her lustrous brine.

It might not be  
He should lie free

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H O M A G E      T O

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For ever in the soft light of the sea,  
For lo! one came,  
Of step more slow than fame,  
Stooped over him—we heard her breathe his name—  
And, as the light drew back,  
Bore him across the track  
Of the subservient waves that dare not foil  
That veiled, maternal figure of its spoil.

Ah! where will she put by  
Her journeying majesty?  
She hath left the lands of the air and sun;  
She will take no rest till her course be run.  
Follow her far, follow her fast,  
Until at last,  
Within a narrow transept led,  
Lo! she unwraps her face to pall her dead.

'Tis England who has travelled far,  
England who brings  
Fresh splendor to her galaxy of Kings.  
We kiss her feet, her hands,  
Where eloquent she stands;  
Nor dare to lead  
A wailful choir about the poet dumb  
Who is become  
Part of the glory that her sons would bleed  
To save from scar;  
Yea, hers in every deed  
As Runnymede,  
Or Trafalgar.

*From the London Spectator.*

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TO ROBERT BROWNING  
BY L. ORMISTON CHANT

Browning has left us; he went from us singing  
Songs of the old world up into the new  
Just a last lay to his lovers down-flinging  
Lover of love, and the truest of true!  
How we shall mourn for him, long for him, need him,  
Miss the bright ring of his clarion note

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## ROBERT BROWNING

---

Piercing the frosts of the mists in the morning,  
Miss the night-trill from the nightingale's throat.  
What have we lost? Not the path where he led us  
Over the moorlands of thought to the sea;  
Not the steep climb up the crags, where he waited,  
While we drew breath, and though panting, were free.  
These he has left; but the sunshine he lent them  
Died, when he died, with the light in his eyes.  
What have we lost? Why the soul of the music;  
Voice that gave tongue to the winds from the skies.

Browning has left us, he went from us singing;  
Never a song more triumphant than his!  
Like a great billow high-rising, and flinging  
Thunder and psalm where the hurricane is,  
So fell his voice on men's storms and uprisings, .  
Sounding clear faith o'er doubt's turbulent wave,  
Wise and so kind his deep thoughts for the doubters,  
Leading them forth from the land of the grave.  
Yet with a love, such a love, ringing through it,  
Born of his grief in a desolate prime,  
Bidding all love follow Love, and for ever  
Pass to her beautiful presence, in time.  
Now he has gone. His dear name in the heaven  
Of the world's singers shines out like a star,  
Great Poet, and Teacher; true lover, we follow  
O'er valley and mountain, to seek thee afar!

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 66\*; also in  
The Women's Penny Paper, Dec. 21, 1889.*

## ROBERT BROWNING

BY ELIZABETH PORTER GOULD

—A peace out of pain,  
Then a light, then thy breast.  
O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest!

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## HOMAGE TO

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### BROWNING

BY IRENE ELDER MORTON

He sits at last among his peers,  
While we stand chilled with eyes grown dim  
In looking over life's grey fields,  
And feel the heart-light folded in.

O great soul! entered in to know  
The fulness of the Central Life!  
O giant leader of the race,  
Who never with the world made strife,

But led it surely, grandly on,  
Scaling clear heights with leap and bound,—  
Then, beckoning with a strong man's hand,  
He kept his way to higher ground!

No maudlin cry he gave the world,—  
“Behold my grief, pity my pain;”  
Strong as the breath of Alpine hills,  
Sweet as the sound of summer rain,

The songs he gave us. Evermore  
The deathless might of English speech  
Shall sound their notes from shore to shore,  
And to the coming nations teach

That it is nobler to endure,  
And smother back the cry of pain—  
Shall call us onward to the heights,  
To press ahead and bear the strain.

He wore no caste-bound fetters here;  
A man of men he proved his soul;  
The mighty pulse within his words  
Beat full and free above control.

The illumined fringes of his thoughts  
Have set the world's face after him,  
As one would follow clear flute notes  
Heard in cool aisles of forests dim.

With loving face of child and friend

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## ROBERT BROWNING

---

To look on as the last of earth,  
God wrapt him in a robe of light,  
And gave him strong immortal birth.

He looks again in the clear eyes  
Of her, the love-dream of his youth,  
The moonlit side of his great heart,  
To whom he gave his manhood's truth.

Perfect conditions of new life  
Are vibrant to his being there,—  
Gone in to feel the wider thrill,  
Gone in to breathe the purer air.

*From A Treasury of Canadian Verse, edited by Theodore H. Rand, p. 249; published with permission of author.*

### IN MEMORIAM

BY ROBERT, LORD HOUGHTON

*Robert Browning, Died 12th December, 1889*

The tale of how you found the promised rest  
Flashed fast from north to south, from sea to sea,  
My father's friend, all friendliness to me,  
Dear Scholar-Poet,—ever welcome guest:  
And gone you are to seek your loved-one's breast,  
Sped your free soul from Italy the free,  
Soul never flinching from the dim To Be,  
Nor doubting of the Good,—and thus, 'tis best.  
'Tis best,—and I, six thousand miles away  
From your and Nelson's Abbey\* arched in gloom,  
Hear through the surge that thunders on the bay  
An echo of your verse's\*\* roll and boom  
That doubly sanctifies Trafalgar day,—  
And waft this Afric leaf to reach your tomb.  
Capetown, 1889.

\* At the battle off Cape St. Vincent, "Nelson . . . gave orders for boarding . . . it was done in an instant, he himself leading the way, and exclaiming—'Westminster Abbey, or victory!'"—Southey's "Life of Nelson."

\*\* "Home Thoughts from the Sea."

*From Stray Verses 1889-1890; London, John Murray, Albemarle St., 1891*

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H O M A G E      T O

## SONNET

BY MRS. LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

The Century was young—the month was May—  
The spacious East was kindled with a light  
That lent a sudden glory to the night,  
And a new star began its upward way  
Toward the high splendor of the perfect day.  
With pure white flame, inexorably bright,  
It reached the souls of men—no stain so slight  
As to escape its all-revealing ray.

When countless voices cried “The Star has set!”  
And through the lands there surged a sea of pain,  
Was it Death’s triumph—victory of Woe?  
Nay! There are lights the sky may not forget;  
When suns, and moons, and souls shall rise again,  
In the New Life’s wide East that star shall glow.

*From The Brownings and America, p. 38; published with permission.*

## TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY GEORGE MEREDITH

“Now dumb is he who waked the world to speak,  
And voiceless hangs the world beside his bier.  
Our words are sobs, our cry of praise a tear:  
We are the smitten mortal, we the weak.  
We see a spirit on Earth’s loftiest peak  
Shine, and wing hence the way he makes more clear:  
See a great Tree of Life that never sere  
Dropped leaf for aught that age or storms might wreak.  
Such ending is not Death: such living shows  
What wide illumination brightness sheds  
From one big heart, to conquer man’s old foes:  
The coward, and the tyrant, and the force  
Of all those weedy monsters raising heads  
When Song is murk from springs of turbid source.”

*From Browning Society Papers, Part 12, p. 27; also Pall Mall Budget, Dec. 13, 1889.*

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ROBERT BROWNING

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TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT BROWNING  
(1812-1889)

BY JOHN SAVARY

Last irony to last age of iron—blundered  
Earthward falling not a meteor vain,  
But a starry poet soul that wondered  
How Jove's eagle fell, that late soared again!  
Cloud-rapt and rushing onward in disdain,  
Power along the far-shining track down thundered  
Past me his long thoughts' heaven-laden train,  
Jarring sense by weight and speed of packed brain  
Which fruitage bore of ages grasped and plundered.  
We ne'er shall see his equal or a second  
He has gone from us, still condensing scorn  
Of our language here for his too high-born  
Thoughts: *Æschylus* and *Shakespeare* him have  
beckoned.  
And we hear as when Balaustion said  
Unto a friend "Euripides is dead."

*From Literary World, Jan. 4, 1890.*

## THE TWELFTH OF DECEMBER, 1889

BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER

On this day Browning died?  
Say, rather: On the tide  
That throbs against those glorious palace walls;  
That rises—pauses—falls,  
With melody, and myriad-tinted gleams;  
On that enchanted tide,  
Half real, and half poured from lovely dreams,  
A Soul of Beauty—a white, rhythmic flame—  
Passed singing forth into the Eternal Beauty whence it  
came.

*From "Browning Memorial"; published with the permission of the Boston Browning Society.*

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H O M A G E      T O

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ROBERT BROWNING

BY FREDERIC BRETON

(*Died at Venice 10 p. m., December 12, 1889*)

The lamp is out! The house of clay  
Stands dark and tenantless to-day!  
"To him and us, is't loss or gain?" you say.

See! Yonder flashed a meteor bow!  
An instant only, and, beyond the flow  
Of salt lagoon, we saw the ocean glow.

An instant only! Then the night  
Seemed darker than before the light  
That broke our blindness with its arrow flight.

The darker?—Yes! But we have learned  
In vain, for what our spirit yearned  
—The wider world, whereon that meteor burned?

A world outside our little woe  
Kept wholesome by the ebb and flow  
Of mighty tides!—Gain surely, this to know?

So stand we at the outer gate  
Whence beamed a beacon light of late,  
But now untenanted, dark, desolate.

Yes! House all darkness, but the road  
Of life where shone that kind abode,  
The brighter for the Pisgah sight bestowed!

For Meteor, Master,—both made plain,  
Around a life of seeming bane,  
God's reconciling ocean.—This *our* gain!

And *his*?—Yet greater, for away  
From night, he sees in deathless day  
His faith fulfilled—Love, Power, come full in play.

*From The Academy, December 10, 1896.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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### ROBERT BROWNING

BY ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS-WARD

Nay,—let the soul go its own way upon  
Its last desire; mine to the uttermost  
Do ye fulfil. Thus shall it be. Obey.  
Within the crypt where England calls her great  
Greatest, and names her dearest yet more dear  
Unto the prayers than to the pride of men,  
Let Shakespeare, loving lightly, rest content.  
Leave Milton, desolate in home and tomb.  
Leave placid Wordsworth to his sylvan dream.

For me, I do aspire more highly than  
The grandest lonely ghost in Westminster.

“Where the heart is, let the grave be, also.”

“Soul of my soul!” I “show thee,” and “die last.”  
Behold, I am awearied, and would sleep.  
No place for me, where was no place for *H*er.  
Poets and sages chosen of all time!  
Ye to your glory go,—I to my wife.

*From New York Independent.*

### AT KING'S CHAPEL

*January 28*

BY MRS. ANNIE E. JOHNSON

Awhile from the crowded street  
Are stayed these hurrying feet,  
In the chapel, stately and old.  
Why gather today the throng?  
A poet's heart is cold,  
A glorious king of song.

Soft music, swelling clear,  
Breaks the solemn silence here;  
In the softly shadowed light,  
Glow roses, red and white;

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## H O M A G E      T O

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Lillies and laurel leaves  
A delicate fragrance shed;  
Here many a spirit grieves,  
For Browning, dead.

To give him honor due,  
Meet kindly hearts and true,  
Those who have loved his song  
So hopeful, glad and strong  
(Read, haply, now through tears).  
They love the generous thought,  
To nobler action wrought,—  
In this they are his peers.

Poet, whose laurelled head  
Rests in the Abbey's gloom,  
Where England's sacred dead  
Lie grandly sepulchred,  
And *thou*, whose simple tomb  
Is 'neath Italian skies,  
Where the white roses bloom—  
Here by the western sea,  
Our land, in its love for ye,  
*Is England, is Italy!*

*From the Boston Transcript.*

## BROWNING

BY ALICIA VAN BUREN

When Raphael heard the crowd applaud his art,  
He smiled up-buoyed with pleasure; yet, I trow,  
No laudatory phrase could thrill his heart  
Like one short word from Angelo.

So Verdi, when the plaudits wax most loud,  
Forgets the cheering and the wreaths that fall,  
And looks where sits, amid the noisy crowd,  
“Rossini patient in his stall.”

And Browning—let the world give praise or blame!  
Two voices he could hear, and ever heard:  
The voice of Landor, trumpeting his fame,  
And hers, “half-angel and half-bird.”

*From the Boston Browning Society 1909-1910, p. 20;  
published with permission of the Society.*

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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Suggested by The Epilogue in "Asolando."

Χαῖρε, μακαρ· σὲ μὲν οὐδὲ δακρυσομέν, εἰς Αἴδαο  
τὸν δολιχὸν ζωῆς ἔξανύσαντα δρόμον·  
τοῖον γὰρ θνήσκων ἐλίπεις μέλος ἀνθρώπουσιν,  
σῆμα χέων ψυχῆς οὐ τάφον ἀκαμάτου·  
ἀμφοῖν γὰρ συνέβη μᾶς ἥμέρᾳ εἰς φάος ἐλθεῖν,  
τῷ μὲν ἐνὶ θνητοῖς, σοὶ δὲ υπερουρανιον.

H. McL. I.

ATHENAEUM, December 21st, 1889.

### A FAREWELL

A TRANSLATION BY HENRY TRANTHAM

Not a fretful tear shall fall for thee in parting,  
Now that thou hast made thy race;  
For such a song of triumph hast thou left us  
As one who goes to greet a living master  
Face to Face.

### TO ROBERT BROWNING

BY MRS. E. DICKINSON WEST

True-hearted Seer, whose keen and steady eye  
Keeping a view-point on an eminence  
That reacheth Aither, o'er the world of sense,  
Doth, as from prophet's watch-tower, thence descry  
Proportions of the things of earth and sky,—  
Tell us thy vision when our sight is bound  
Where little swellings of the lower ground  
Seem our life's only truths because they lie  
Betwixt the soul and things whereof it saith  
"This I believe" (which meaneth "this I let  
Please vacant fancy in one day in seven.")—  
—Strengthen thy brethren by thy strength of faith  
And teach our human love in trust to set  
Its continuity 'twixt Earth and Heaven.

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## HOMAGE TO

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### ROBERT BROWNING

BY WILLIAM SHARP

'One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would  
triumph:  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.'

(*Died at Palazzo Rezzonico, Venice, 12th December.  
Interred in Westminster Abbey, 31st December.*)

So, it is well: what need is there to mourn?  
What of the darkness was there, of the dread,  
Of all the pity of old age forlorn  
When the swift mind and hand are though as dead?  
Nothing: the change was his that comes to days  
When, after long, rich, restful afternoons,  
A sudden flush of glory fills the skies:  
Thereafter is the peace of dream-fraught moons,  
And then, oh! then for sure, in the eastern ways  
At morn, once more Life's golden floods arise.

Ay, it is well: what better fate were his?  
Why wish for him the twilight-greyness drear?  
He hath not known the bitter thing it is  
To halt, and doubt, grope blindly, tremble, fear:  
The reverend snows above his forehead brought  
No ominous hints of that which might not be,  
No chill suggestion of the ephemeral soul:  
Unto the very end 'twas his to see  
Failure no drear climacteric, but wrought  
To nobler issues, a victorious goal.

There where the long lagoons by day and night  
Feel the swift journeying tides, in ebb and flow,  
Move inward from the deep with sound and light  
And splendour of the seas, or outward go  
Resurgent from the city that doth rest  
Upon the flood even as a swan asleep,  
Or as a lily 'mid encircling streams,  
Or as a flower a dusky maid doth keep,  
An orient maid, upon her love-warm breast,  
Thrilled with its inspiration through her dreams:—  
There, in the city that he loved so well,  
And with the sea-sound in his ears, the sound

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

Of healing waters in their miracle  
Of changeless and regenerative round,  
The strange and solemn silence that is death  
Came o'er him. 'Mid the loved ones near  
The deep suspense of the last torturing hope  
Hung like a wounded bird, ere swift and sheer  
It fall with the last frail exhausted breath  
And feeble fluttering wings that cannot ope.

There death was his: within his golden prime,  
Painless, serene, unvanquished, undismayed,  
He fronted the dark lapse of mortal time  
With eyes alit, through all the gathering shade,  
With the strange light that clothes immortal things—  
Beauty, and Truth, Faith, Hope, and Joy, and Peace,  
The garnered harvest of our human years,  
Fair dreams and hopes that triumphed o'er surcease,  
The immaculate sweetness of all bygone Springs,  
The rainbow-glory of transfigured tears.

Over him went the Powers, the Dreams, the Graces,  
The invisible Dominations that we know  
Despite the mystic veil that hides their faces,  
The immortal faces that divinely glow:  
Fair Hope was there to take him by the hand;  
White Aspirations smiled about his bed;  
Desires and Dreams moved gently by his side;  
Beauty stooped low, and shone upon the dead;  
Joy spake not, for, from out the Deathless land,  
She led God's loveliest gift, his long-lost Bride.

Oh, what a trivial mockery then was this,  
The change we so involve with alien terror:  
How lorn in light of that supernal bliss  
The ruinous wrecking folly of our error!  
Sweet beyond words the meeting that was there,  
Sweet beyond words the deep-set yearning gaze,  
Sweet, sweet the voice that long had silent been!  
Ah, how his soul, beleaguered by no maze,  
No glooms of Death, i' that Paradisal air  
Knew all was well, since She was there, his Queen.  
They are not gone, those Dreams, Fair Hopes, and Graces,  
Those Powers and Dominations and Desires,  
They are not passed, though veiled the immortal faces,

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## HOMAGE TO

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Though dimmed meanwhile their eyes' wild starry fires.  
Meanwhile, it may be, on wan wings and slender,  
Invisible to mortal gaze, they gleam  
In solemn, sad, processional array  
There where the sunshafts through stained windows  
stream,  
And flood the gloomful majesty with splendour,  
And charm the aisles from out their brooding grey.

They are not gone: nor shall they ever vanish,  
Those precious ministers of him, our Poet:  
What madness would it be for one to banish,  
To barter his inheritance, forego it,  
For some phantasmal gift, some transient boon!  
Thus would it be with us were we to turn  
Indifferently aside, when *they* draw nigh,  
To look with callous gaze, nor once discern  
How swift they come and go, how all too soon  
They evade for ever the unheeding eye.

They are not gone: for wheresoe'er there liveth  
One hope his song inspired—whom *they* inspired—  
Yea, wheresoever in one heart there breatheth  
An aspiration by his ardour fired:  
Where'er through him are souls made serfs to Beauty,  
Where'er through him hearts stir with lofty aim,  
Where'er through him men thrill with high endeavour,  
There shall these ministers breathe low his name,  
Linked to ideals of Love and Truth and Duty,  
And all high things of mind and soul, for ever.

No carven stone, no monumental fane,  
Can equal this: that he hath builded deep  
A cenotaph beyond the assoiling reign  
Of Her whose eyes are dusk with Night and Sleep,  
Queenly Oblivion: no Pyramid,  
No vast, gigantic Tomb, no Sepulchre  
Made awful with imag'ries of doom,  
Evade her hand who one day shall inter  
Man's proudest monuments, as she hath hid  
The immemorial past within her womb.

For he hath built his lasting monument  
Within the hearts and in the minds of men:  
The Powers of Life around its base have bent

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## ROBERT BROWNING

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The Stream of Memory: our furthest ken  
Beholds no reach, no limit to its rise;  
It hath foundations sure; it shall not pass;  
The ruin of Time upon it none shall see,  
Till the last wind shall wither the last grass,  
Nay, while man's Hopes, Fears, Dreams, and Agonies  
Uplift his soul to Immortality.

*From The Art Review, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 33-34-35-36;  
published with permission of the editors.*

### ROBERT BROWNING

(December 12th, 1889)

BY GEORGE O'BYRNE

To the princely son of Shakespeare, of fair Lyceum  
renown,  
Whose fealty to the Drama hath won the Thespian  
crown,  
Inscribed is my brief Epicede on one, whose transit hence  
Hath struck the soul with sorrow, and 'waked sympathy  
intense.  
For, well 'tis known, his vision, by the process of the  
Stage,  
Is broadened, and his heart laments the lost bard of the  
Age;  
And with graciousness will listen to the elegy I quire,  
Albeit sparse in genius, and tenderness, and fire.

I who erewhile sang of Byron, and of Burns, and of  
Kirke White.  
In the worn year's dusky waning mourn another bard  
of light,  
Lying cold, and mute, and dreamless, set by the Hours  
free,  
In a palace of the "Bride," and "glorious City in the  
Sea."

Ah! the bards, where'er their cradle, by prior right belong  
To the rich haunts of the Muses in the sunny lands of  
song,  
That sparkle from the Apennines to past the AEGean Sea,

---

## HOMAGE TO

---

Shrine the glories of Parnassus and the fames of Thessaly.

Where Art still claims her temples, though old worshippers are flown,  
And to the wistful pilgrim Freedom crieth from the stone:  
Where gorgeous, silent sculptures speak an empire passed away;  
And flash the gondolas along the tradeless, purple bay,  
He sleeps in rigid calmness, the white-haired minstrel prince,  
Who won a world's idolatry—I reck not how long since.  
Though her "Lion's Mouth" is seal'd and her Doges rule no more,  
In Desolation beautiful she touches the heart's core;  
For her genii wrought their marvels in the spell of old Argives,  
Ere modern atom-counters span mere chrematistic lives:  
And her trophies are not lessened because to-day there sleeps  
The grand bard, sumptuous Albion, with fallen Venice, weeps.

While Science slays her thousands, battling in the van of Truth;  
And "Excelsior"—streamer waving, falls her Alp-aspiring youth;  
While the weary world, half-hopeless, searches for each dim abyss  
To grasp a "golden compass," or hail new star of bliss:  
When empirics and their myrmidons, with dynasties conspire  
To burn the prophet's life-scroll, and quench the Muse's lyre,  
We shall miss his notes of beauty, of strong solace, and high hope,—  
That message from the gods to us, *without an envelope!*—  
We shall miss his velvet finger on the pulse of hot emprise,  
We shall miss his soothing anodynes in labour's agonies.  
Who hence shall harp his music? shall weave fit anadem  
To crown the scholars' temples, or intone their requiem?  
For Bryant and sweet Longfellow sleep 'neath Columbia's "Stars,"  
Where the palsied hand of Whittier his vernal "wood-notes" mars;

---

## ROBERT BROWNING

---

And Hugo (though I loved him not) has found his  
monument,  
And 'Martin' of 'Philosophy,' the weirdly sapient;  
And good Eliza Cook warms not the breast with noble  
thought;  
While Tennyson's most dulcet lute the "rift within"  
hath caught.  
In regal halls, Roumania's Queen alone thrills Sappho's  
lyre!—  
What monarch stoops to acolyte the proscribed poets'  
choir?  
While Altar, Senate, Throne, and Camp deride each  
other's voice  
How may the Muses flourish, how can the Arts rejoice?

Who now shall urge explorer lone through sombre forests  
proud,  
O'er Arctic snows, and towering peaks that pinnacle the  
cloud?  
And kindle pœan for serried hosts, that, marching forth  
in pain,  
With hasty 'Pasch,' and bleeding feet, have reached the  
Red Tide's plain?  
And then, 'midst frenzied billows, shall point to safe  
rock higher,  
And proudly sound joy's timbrel across the 'Sea of Fire?'  
And harking back to Miriam, my mind greets Browning's  
bride,  
The fair lip whisp'ring \*'God is rest,' in long years by  
his side.  
The minstrel learned it was 'not good' for man alone  
to dwell;—  
That 'the Voice which breathed o'er Eden' a changeless  
truth doth tell.  
With all the Muses' dowry, and the 'permit' of each  
Grace,  
The nuptials of a poet and poetess found place.  
A tear for her, reposing 'midst Italia's deathless bowers  
Of consecrated myrtle, in the "City of All Flowers!"'  
'Twere meet, methinks, that minstrel souls (born in the  
merry May)  
Should wing their flight when Christmas floods the  
world with hollied ray:  
If lose we *must* their halo, let us yield it at the birth

---

## HOMAGE TO

---

Of Light supreme, whose heaven is then reflected over earth.

For we joy to paint them thridding a paradise of peace  
While belfry chimes tell mortals of divinest harmonies,  
And the chastened snow, like mercy, dropping gently on  
their tombs,

Transforms the cypress o'er them to celestial nodding plumes;

When the 'Truce of God' is signalled from remotest clime to clime

By the watchers of Eternity to sentinels of Time:  
When, gathering by the ingle, in the effluence of love,  
We anticipate re-union with remembered souls above,  
Rehearsing golden lessons of immortal Sage and Child,  
Made dearer by the Poet who late amidst us smiled.

---

\* Elizabeth—"God is rest."

*Nottingham, December, 1889.*

## TO THE POET

(*A Sonnet*)

BY RIICHIOR HOASHI

Take me, O Poet, to thy world of dream,  
Where countless cherubs on their pinions white  
Wander through stainless Virtue's silver light,  
And bask in heavenly Love's auroral gleam;  
Or where thou treadest the star-sprinkled stream  
Of Galaxy, upon whose banks the bright  
Amaranths blow! Soothed by the beauteous sight  
And balmy air, our life's a dream, a dream  
Is life. Strike up thy lyre, O Seer, O Bard,  
Awake thy fancy's sweetest tune, for none  
But thine may soothe my sorrow-laden heart!  
Construct for me a rainbow bridge to span  
The highest heaven, whence Truth's live fire shall dart  
Into my frozen soul and make me man!

---

ROBERT BROWNING

---

THY CROWN'S A STAR

*Dedicated to Robert Browning*

BY ANNIS J. SCOTT

The pathway narrows as we wander down,  
And leave the hillside, rugged, rough, and brown.  
We look toward sunlit meadows, bright, and gay,  
With flowers that catch the sunshine of the day.

Still farther on, a river runs so still,  
We hear not, see not; yet we know its will  
Is to be silent, till we reach its brink,  
And into its soft shadows, gently sink.

Upon its banks, tall grass and rushes grow,  
That sway, and nod, as gentle zephyrs blow.  
Refreshed, we rise: flows on the river, slow,  
Between its banks, where reeds, and rushes grow.

This valley green, with flowers so gay bedecked,  
This river, cool, its current still unchecked,  
Could never to the multitude be blest,  
Did not yon mountains give the vale, their best.

From these great towers, glowing with their light,  
Come streams of strength, and brilliancy, and might.  
The valley, rich with their great wealth, was made,  
And hills rejoiced to rest within their shade.

O mountain-peaks, that, reaching, pierce the dome;  
O meadows, sweet, that blossom where we roam;  
O river, flowing, ever, 'tween thy banks,  
Let us, whose footsteps wander, give thee thanks.

We see beyond the river's farther side,  
A Mountain, proud, where gods of thought abide:  
With crown of silver, shining like a star,  
Distinct, alone, 'mong many stars that are.

We heed not that the pathway narrows; now  
We catch the glory shining from thy brow.  
O Friend, and Seer, thou'st filled the meadow sweet,  
With flowers fair, to soothe the wanderer's feet!

Thy feet have trod the narrow, narrow way;  
Thy hills are left; and at the close of day,  
Thou slipped into the stream; it goes its way,  
But thou arose. Thy crown's a star, today.

---

---

H O M A G E      T O

---

ASPIRATION\*

*Dedicated to Robert Browning*

BY ALICE HARRIMAN

Oh, gallant little English lad,  
You never knew the time,  
When you did not intend to be  
Most eminent in rhyme.

Immortal company you chose!  
Endymion was your friend;  
And Shelley's sky-lark, every morn,  
Was wont your heart to rend.

The poets of the English Lakes  
Enticed, with beckoning hand,  
To climb to hills whereon they stood;  
To view the promised land,—

Range after range—Parnassian peaks,  
Of purest poetry.  
“I'll scale them all!” your spirit cried;  
“‘Sky-treader’ would *I* be!”

But somehow, on your natal day,  
I see you, wistful, sad.  
If it could be, oh, would you be,  
Again a little lad?

---

\*Browning's sister said he once told her he never knew the time when he did not aspire to be eminent in rhyme.  
—*Gosse*.

---

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ROBERT BROWNING

---

THE MASTER SINGER

BY ELIZABETH CLENDENNING RING

"Master!" the Singing Men acclaim thee,—pale  
Before thy altar fires,  
Like winds before the rain's grey flail,  
To muted lyres,  
Their voices rise and fall.

Thou moving down the starry ways,  
With tread Olympian,  
Whisp'ring some bold, symphonic phrase.  
In thy perfected song,  
To shades Elysian,  
Dost smiling hear their hymns of praise.

Flute-clear behind the old grey wall,  
Still echoes Pippa's dreamlit call,  
And oft when down a dust-bleak street,  
Her laughing song goes lilting, sweet,  
Men stop to ponder the strange dream,  
Awakened by her song serene.

Still Andrea mourns his tarnished dreams,  
The dying Bishop plots and schemes,  
To lie in blissful ecstasy,  
'Neath matchless lapis lazuli.  
Still, down a haunted Roman Street,  
Pompilia hastens with bleeding feet,  
Swift to her doom.

Sordello, Ezra, grave physicians,  
Blougram and Sludge, inspired musicians,  
Women divine and maids whose tresses  
Lure men to death with mad caresses,  
Each in his turn, upon thy stage,  
Work out thy creed Immortal Sage.

That Love exalted, all persistent,  
Shall reign, though Hate may mock and scheme,  
That Righteousness, with note insistent,  
Shall quench Wrong's brutal, sordid theme.  
That Truth above the market place,  
Where Falsehood flaunts her shameless grace,  
Shall lift the glory of her face.

---

---

ROBERT BROWNING

---

ART AND POPULARITY

*To R. Browning*

(“*No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better*”).

BY E. D. W. (ELIZABETH D. WEST DOWDEN)

Haply thy life were harmed if earth her fame  
Had proffered ere years proved thou didst not need  
Drink of applause Arts' daily force to feed;  
Ere the  $\piοητης$  —God,—deep source whence came  
Thy poet's impulse, bade thee first to claim  
Reward like to His own—true artists' meed  
Of joy that flows in essence of the deed,  
Unreached by accident of laud or blame.

But now, since thou through long uncrowned days  
Didst draw soul's strength from draughts of that old wine  
Of gladness, which doth evermore sustain  
All Nature's working, human or divine:  
No fear for thee, lest thou that first good gain  
Shouldst quit, to thirst for new wine of men's praise.

1892.

*Printed with kind permission of Mrs. Edward Dowden.*



“Or at times a modern volume,—Wordsworth’s solemn-thoughted idyl,  
Howitt’s ballad-verse, or Tennyson’s enchanted reverie,—  
Or from Browning some ‘Pomegranate’, which, if cut  
deep down the middle,  
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined  
humanity.”

*Lady Geraldine’s Courtship.*

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

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